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**THE
ROMISH AND PRELITICAL RITE
OF
CONFIRMATION EXAMINED.**

J. F. TROW & CO., PRINTERS,
33 Ann-street, New-York.

THE
ROMISH AND PRELATICAL RITE
OF

CONFIRMATION

EXAMINED:

AND PROVED TO BE CONTRARY TO THE SCRIPTURES,

AND THE PRACTICE OF ALL THE EARLIEST AND PUREST
CHURCHES, BOTH ORIENTAL AND WESTERN.

BY

THOMAS SMYTH, D. D.

AUTHOR OF "LECTURES ON THE APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION,"
"PRESBYTERY AND NOT PRELACY THE SCRIPTURAL
AND PRIMITIVE POLITY," ETC.

WITH AN APPENDIX,
ON THE DUTY OF REQUIRING A PUBLIC
PROFESSION OF RELIGION.

NEW-YORK:

MARK H. NEWMAN, ROBERT CARTER, LEAVITT, TROW & CO., AND
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"CONFIRMATION IS TOO OFTEN SO MISTAKEN AND PERVERTED, AS TO BECOME AN EMPTY AND UNMEANING FORM, OR A DANGEROUS SNARE."—*Archbishop Whately, Charges and other Tracts*, p. 93.

"THE INVENTION THAT WAS AFTERWARDS FOUND OUT, BY WHICH THE BISHOP WAS HELD TO BE THE ONLY MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION, WAS A PIECE OF SUPERSTITION, WITHOUT ANY COLOUR FROM SCRIPTURE."—*Bishop Burnet on the XXXIX. Art.*, p. 354.

"PROPERLY, THEN, CONFIRMATION WAS A TEMPORARY USAGE, CONNECTED WITH A MIRACULOUS DISPLAY.—IT IS NOT A SACRAMENT, NOR WOULD THAT CHURCH BE UNAPOSTOLICAL WHICH SHOULD REJECT IT."—*History of the Rise and Progress of Christianity*, by Dr. Hinds of Oxford, and Chaplain to Archbishop Whately.

This Treatise

**IS DEDICATED TO ALL WHO WISH TO BE
CONFIRMED IN THE TRUTH,
AND DELIVERED FROM BONDAGE
TO A RITE
BY WHICH THEY ARE CONFIRMED IN ERROR
AND DELUSION.**

JUN 26 1901 **150053**

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PREFACE.

The occasion of this work was that mentioned in its introduction. Since the discourse was delivered which is there alluded to, others, I understand, have been preached in different churches. The subject was, therefore, on several occasions brought to the author's attention, both by facts which confirmed him in the belief that a more than ordinary boldness was manifested in the maintenance of the exclusive pretensions of the Romish and Prelatical churches; and also by the expressed desire that he would discourse upon the subject. And as I had not considered this question in any of my works, because I deemed it unnecessary, I felt that I should be without excuse in declining the discussion.

These facts I mention, not in any controversial spirit, but by way of avoiding controversy. That discourses should be delivered on this subject, in any or in all of the churches in Charleston, was a matter with which I had nothing to do, and of which I do not complain. Neither have I on this occasion either *sought* or *obtained* an outline of the arguments by which, on any of these occasions, the rite of confirmation was defended. further than information was sought from me as to cer-

tain passages of Scripture and facts connected with the question. While, therefore, my present examination of this subject took its origin in the facts alluded to, the discussion itself is conducted without any reference to such discourses, and just as it would have been had no such sermons been preached at all. The work is not, therefore, controversial, but a plain, honest, and fearless defence of the truth, simplicity and charity of the gospel, against the error, superstition, and intolerance of Romanism and High-Churchism, and as the subject is one of general and great present interest, I have adapted the work (which forms the substance of two discourses) to general use, and published it for general circulation.

ERRATA.

In consequence of the distance of the writer from the press, the following errors could not be corrected.

- P. 15, line 6, insert after "which," the words *a reference to*.
- P. 18-19, append first paragraph of Note, to Note 3 on p. 17.
- P. 23, 5th line from bottom, read "that *it* is exposed in Perrin."
- P. 67, line 5, after "baptism" insert the word *neither*.
- P. 83, line 16, for "article of faith" read *articles*, and in Note 3, for "additions" read *editions*, and for "once" read "are."
- P. 90, line 9, for "*circumcision*," read *confirmation*.
- P. 131, line 4, strike out the word *reference*.
- P. 137, line 6, strike out the word *thus*.
- P. 140, line 14, read "These symbols were"
- P. 145, line 4, for *inquiries* read "inquiring," and in Note 2, for *Hurd's* read "Hinds'."
- P. 155, line 17, for *audible*, read "audibly."

CONTENTS.

SECTION I.

	PAGE
Origin of this Investigation, and the Nature of Imposition of Hands explained,	13

SECTION II.

The Romish and Prelatical Doctrine concerning Confirmation,	24
---	----

SECTION III.

Confirmation implies the Truth of the Doctrine of Apostolical Succession, and is therefore Unscriptural,	31
---	----

SECTION IV.

Confirmation implies the Institution of Christ and his Apos- tles, which is disproved,	42
---	----

SECTION V.

Acts 14. 22, Examined,	56
----------------------------------	----

SECTION VI.

Heb. 6. 1, 2, Examined,	64
-----------------------------------	----

SECTION VII.

Why Imposition of Hands was Continued in the Church, .	71
--	----

SECTION VIII.

	PAGE
Confirmation not found in any of the Primitive or Oriental Churches.—When Introduced,	77

SECTION IX.

Other Testimonies against Confirmation,	86
---	----

SECTION X.

Presbyters as well as Prelates were formerly allowed to Confirm, with Concluding Remarks on the Historical Testimony,	99
---	----

SECTION XL

Confirmation injurious to the Character of God and of his true Ministers,	104
---	-----

SECTION XII.

Confirmation is injurious to the Sacrament of Baptism, and to the Recipients Themselves.—Conclusion,	111
APPENDIX,	127
NOTES,	129

CONFIRMATION EXAMINED.

SECTION I.

Origin of this investigation, and the nature of Imposition of Hands explained.

It is my design to call the attention of my readers at this time to the nature of confirmation, as it exists in the Romish and prelatie churches. This I do because the subject has recently been brought forward in a prominent manner in this city,¹ and led to the inquiry, by some who heard the discussion, how far the positions then advanced, and the passages of Scripture then given in proof, were capable of explanation and reply. I most readily, therefore, embrace the first leisure opportunity of entering upon an examination of this subject, in accordance with the apostolic canon, which requires that we should ever be found ready to give a reason for the doctrines and order of our church,

¹ In St. Michael's Church.

as well as for our personal faith in them, to every man that asketh it.

And I enter on this inquiry upon this occasion, because the subject is intimately connected with the ordinance of baptism, which is now to be administered;¹ for if the doctrine of confirmation, as held either by Romanists or prelatists, be correct, then is our baptism vain, our Christianity imperfect, and we are still unregenerate, alienated from God, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel; and while wearing the name and profession of Christians, are in God's estimation no better than the impenitent around us.

Confirmation consists in the imposition of hands, with prayer and other ceremonies, for the full admission of baptized persons into the church, and their participation of that further grace which it is necessary to convey. Such is the most general, and least objectionable, exhibition of this rite which can be given. We are therefore led in the first place to inquire into

¹ The author has a regular season for the administration of baptism every quarter, in connexion with the administration of the communion, when he is accustomed to preach on some topic connected with the ordinance.

the nature of imposition of hands, as explained in the word of God, that we may understand in what possible sense it can be attributed to this rite. I confine myself to the ceremony of imposition of hands, because the rite takes its origin from passages in which this occurs, and because if *its* connection with this rite can be overthrown, it will be needless to consider the claims of the other ceremonies which the church of Rome makes essential to the proper administration of this rite, such as signing with the sign of the cross, anointing with the oil and balsam, slapping on the cheek, kissing on the cheek (which appears certainly very indecorous and shameful, at least in the case of young ladies, on the part of those who are sworn to such entire non-intercourse with the female sex), the giving of the pax, and the presence of a godfather as "a monitor," "a captain," and "a fencing master!"¹ As to these forms, I say, and the previous fastings and confessions which are still in use in the Romish church, it will not be very necessary to show that they are as unscriptural as they are absurd, and that they may safely be

¹ See Catechism of Council of Trent, Part ii. p. 182, &c., 192, &c.

left to complement the pagan ritual which that church has embodied in her pantomimic caricature of a pure and simple Christianity.¹ And

¹ On these and the whole form of administering confirmation in the Romish church, see Catechism of Council of Trent, and the Decrees of the Council of Trent, seventh session. See also Martene de Ritibus Antiq. Eccl., tom. i. 253, &c., lib. i. c. 2, art. 4; and Assemani's Biblioth. Orient. On the paganism of the Romish ritual and practices and peculiar dogmas, see Middleton's Letter from Rome; Stillingfleet on the Idolatry of the Church of Rome; The Conformity between Ancient and Modern Ceremonies, &c., translated from the French, Lond., 1745; and a recently republished work entitled Paganus Papismus. See also Hough's Reply to the Abbe Dubois, p. 87, &c.; Conder's View of all Religions, p. 20, &c. "Besides," says Calvin (Inst. b. iv. c. xix. § xii.), "even if they could prove themselves to imitate the apostles in the imposition of hands, in which they have nothing similar to the apostles, except this preposterous mimicry, whence do they derive their oil, which they call the oil of salvation? Who has taught them to seek salvation in oil? Who has taught them to attribute to it the property of imparting spiritual strength? Is it Paul, who calls us from the elements of this world, and sincerely condemns an attachment to such observances? On the contrary, I fearlessly pronounce, not of myself, but from the Lord, that those who call oil the oil of salvation, abjure the salvation which is in Christ, reject Christ, and have no part in the kingdom of God. The oil is for the belly, and the belly for oil; the Lord shall

although many prelatists have approved¹ of some of these forms which were retained² in the church of England at its first reformation, yet are they obliged to admit that as “neither this, the sign of the cross, nor the unction, having any text of Scripture that is clear on their side; and since it cannot be made to appear that either of them was practised or used by the apostles, we may reasonably suppose that they were taken up at first by the authority and discretion of every church for itself.”³

Imposition of hands was a very ancient rite, in common use under the former economy, when a blessing was sought, or a sacrifice offered for any one, with confession of sins (Gen. 48. 14. Num. 27. 18, &c. 2 Kings, 5. 11. Lev. 16. 21, and 24. 14. Num. 8. 12). It was also used under the New Testament economy by our

destroy both: all these weak elements ‘which perish with the using’ have no connexion with the kingdom of God, which is spiritual and shall never perish.”

¹ Wheatley on the Common Prayer, p. 399, 400; Palmer’s Antiq. of the English Ritual; and the Oxford Tracts.

² It still requires godfathers. Hey’s Lect. in Divinity, vol. ii. p. 463; and Wheatley, p. 395.

³ Wheatley, *ibid.* See also Hey’s Lectures in Divinity, b. iv. xxxv. 3. 216, vol. ii. p. 460, and p. 484.

Saviour in communicating his divine blessing, and healing the sick (Matt. 19. 13. Mark 5. 23. Matt. 9. 18); and by his apostles, first in healing the sick (Acts 9. 12 and 17, and 28. 8); secondly, in imparting the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8. 19, and 19. 6. 2 Tim. 1. 6); and finally in inaugurating deacons or presbyters into office (1 Tim. 5. 22. Acts 6. 6, and 13. 2, 3).

These are all the instances in which the use of imposition of hands occurs in the New Testament, and the only purposes for which it was applied. Neither do we find that it was used in the Jewish synagogue except for the single purpose of inaugurating the presidents and ministers of the synagogue into their office. Lightfoot is of opinion that the use of this ceremony had altogether ceased among the Jews from a period prior to the second temple and that it was not in existence during our Saviour's time.¹

¹ Riddle, in his *Christian Antiquities*, p. 533, says, "In like manner, the unction or chrism, *χρίσμα*, of which we read in the New Testament (1 John 2. 27; 2 Cor. 1. 21), although interpreted by some as relating to the ceremony confirmation, cannot be so referred with any degree of certainty, and seems to describe rather a spiritual anointing.

Vitringa and Witsius take a medium course and clearly prove, that while some ordinations

or to relate to the kingly and priestly dignity of Christians (1 Pet. 2. 9), or to the possession of extraordinary and miraculous powers. And the same remark would apply to the Scriptural expression *σφραγίζονται*, to seal (Eph. 1. 13 ; 4. 30 ; 2 Cor. 1. 22), which denotes the assurance or consciousness of divine favor and assistance. Early expositors refer this expression indeed to baptism ; but not to confirmation."

Lightfoot (Works, vol. viii. pp. 459, 460) says: "The ordaining of the elders, and beheading the heifer, is by the three. In this thing, therefore, this present action agreeth with the common usage of the synagogue,—that three persons, Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen, lay their hands on two that were to be sent out, Paul and Barnabas. But in that they lay on their hands, they do, also, recede from the usual custom. After what manner is the ordaining of elders for ever? Not that they should lay their hands upon the head of an elder, but only should call him 'Rabbi,' and say to him, 'Behold, thou art ordained and hast power of judging,' " &c.

"Laying on of hands in the ordination of elders, was hardly used at all, either under the first temple, or before, or under the second temple. It was not under the second temple, if we may believe the Rabbin newly quoted ; or at least if it was used, it was abolished at last. And before the second temple where is there any sign or footstep of such a thing?" Vitringa, it is true, is of opinion that Lightfoot has inferred more from the words of Maimonides than

were performed with imposition of hands, other officers were appointed with the simple declara-

is necessary;* and he therefore thinks, both from him and from other Jewish authorities whom he quotes, that there were two methods of induction into office: one by imposition of hands, together with the words "*ecce tu es promotus*," and "now behold be thou promoted;" and another in which the words alone, without any imposition of hands, took place. This he substantiates from the Gemara, where it is asked, whether ordination is performed by the hand only? He replies, "Not so, but with the declaration also."† And Tacuthuros is quoted: "But ordination is not performed by the hand only, but also by pronouncing the words only (*sed etiam sermone solo*)."‡ Witsius is of opinion that the ordination of the electors (*electorum*) was by imposition of hands, and that this was different from that by which the senior (*senior*) was created. And with this opinion Vitringa on the whole agrees.§ He adds: "Perhaps we may conclude this much, that while the affairs of the Hebrews flourished in Canaan, the presidents and ministers of the synagogue, who depended for their support upon the synagogue, were confirmed in their office by imposition of hands."|| In

* Petrus Cunæus, in his *De Repub. Hebr.*, cap. xii., however, takes the same view as Lightfoot, and is quoted with approbation by the London ministers, in the *Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry*, part i. pp. 184, 185.

† *Miscell. Sacr.*, lib. ii. *Dissert.* iii. 46, *De Heb. Synag.*

‡ *De Vet. Synag.*, pp. 837, 838.

§ *Ibid.* 838.

|| *Ibid.* p. 839.

tion of authority. All, however, agree that there was no repetition of ordination as is now common in the case of Romish and prelatical orders. The Jewish synagogue, from which the Christian church took its model,¹ had therefore no ceremony corresponding to confirmation. It is true that at the age of thirteen, the children of the Jews were considered as coming under all the provisions of the law, and denominated "children of the precept," according to Abenesdra; but that there was any ceremony connected with this transition, corresponding to confirmation, there is no evidence whatever.²

short, those who are called Presbyters, Rabbins, or Doctors, were ordained.*

¹ See the author's work on Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 287, also Vitranga De Vet. Synag., passim, and The Synagogue and the Church, by Rev. J. Bernard, Curate of St. Mary's, Donnybrook. London, 1842.

² Abenesdra on Gen. 17. 14, and Grotius on Luke 2. 42, in *Critica Sacra*, tom. vi. p. 298.

Wheatley on the Book of Common Prayer, page 380, says: "Grotius tells us that at thirteen they were brought to the house of God, in order to be publicly examined; and being approved, were then declared to be children of the

* Bernard's *Synagogue and the Church*, p. 85; and Whateley's *Origin of Romish Errors*, p. 107, c. ii. 5.

These, then, are the only purposes for which imposition of hands was used under apostolic

precept, i. e., they were obliged to keep the law, and were from thenceforth answerable for their own sins."

Now this is one instance out of many I have recently met with in both Romish and prelatical writers, in which they take the most unwarrantable liberties with authors, and force upon them a meaning to suit their own purpose, and sometimes in direct opposition to the author's views. What Grotius *really* says, is: "At ubi de pœnis irrogandis agitur, is qui annum implevit xiii. legibus tenebatur et vocabatur filius præcepti." Vide Abenesdra, &c., see as above, and Grotii Opera, tom. ii. p. 357. Lond., 1679.

As another instance, see Faber on the Albigenses, p. 565. where in the text speaking of the Albigenses, he says: "Their clergy consisted of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons; but the order of Presbyters they divided into classes: that of the seniors, and that of the juniors. All these are simple historical facts."

Such are "plain historical facts" when they make for the "three orders." Now in the notes he gives the words of his author whom he had just named, and upon which he subsequently remarks, showing that he knew what he was doing. They are as follows:

"Ordines Catharorum sunt quatuor. Ille, qui est in primo et maximo ordine, vocatur *Episcopus*. Ille, qui in secundo, vocatur *Filius major*. Qui in tertio *Filius minor*. Qui in quárto et ultimo, vocatur *Diaconus*. Cæteri, qui sunt sine ordine, vocantur Christiani et Christianæ. Officium Episcopi est, semper tenere prioratum in omnibus quæ

direction, and as no one can now, with a *sane* mind, pretend to have the power of "healing all manner of diseases," and conferring all manner of miraculous and supernatural gifts (such as speaking with divers tongues, prophesying, etc.), the only service in which we can find any scriptural authority for employing the ceremony of imposition of hands now is in the ordination of presbyters or bishops, officers which the New Testament every where identify in name, in office, and in authority.¹ Now this is precisely

faciunt, scilicet in impositione manus, in fractione panis, et in incipiendo orare: quæ quidem servant, Filius major absente Episcopo, et Filius minor absente majore. Reiner, de Hæret., c. vi., in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 304."

Now it is here declared that the orders were four: first, "the Bishop," then he who was called "the eldest Son," then "the younger Son," and then "the Deacon;" and that in the absence of the Bishop, the one called "the eldest Son," and in his absence the one called "the younger Son," could impose hands, break the bread, and pray, that is, the Bishops and the Presbyters were of ONE ORDER, though different in their rank and office. And that this is a wilful perpetration of a Romish fraud, appears from the fact that is exposed by Perrin, in his History of the Waldenses, trans. by Lennard, London, 1624, p. 53. 4to.

Another flagrant example of this treacherous dishonesty will be given at the end. See Note A.

¹ See Note B, at the end.

the use which is made of this ceremony in the Presbyterian church, whose fundamental principle it is, to make "the perfect law of God"—which is able "thoroughly to furnish" and guide his church "unto every good work"—the infallible rule of her faith and also of her practice, and thus neither to incur the threatened condemnation of God by adding to, or subtracting from, what "holy men of God who were inspired of the Holy Ghost have written for our instruction, correction and reproof."

SECTION II.

The Romish and Prelatical doctrine concerning Confirmation.

WHAT, then, we would now ask, is affirmed respecting Confirmation? The Romish church, in accordance with the usual tenor of her resolutions, which by their anathematizing and intolerant spirit proclaim how *anti-Christian* and how *contrary* to the gospel she is—has decreed,¹

¹ Canones et Decreta Concil. Trid., p. 44, 46, and 123. Lips. 1827.

Canon, "Whoever shall affirm, that the confirmation of the baptized is a trifling ceremony, and not a true and proper sacrament : or that formerly it was nothing more than a kind of catechizing, in which young persons explained the reason of their faith before the church : LET HIM BE ACCURSED.

"2. Whoever shall affirm, that they offend the Holy Spirit, who attribute any virtue to the said chrism of confirmation : LET HIM BE ACCURSED.

"3. Whoever shall affirm, that the usual administrator of confirmation is not the bishop only, but any ordinary priest : LET HIM BE ACCURSED."

And as it regards the prelatic church, she concurs with her Romish mother in asserting the necessity of this ordinance ; in limiting its administration to the bishop ; and in excommunicating all who will dare to question its truth or power.¹ Wheatley, the standard expositor of the Book of Common Prayer, may, I presume, be taken as a fair propounder of the true prelatical belief concerning confirmation.² He says,

¹ See the Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical VI. in "The Clergyman's Assistant." Oxford, 1838 ; p. 23.

² Oxford, 1819 ; p. 389. Should any one think this

“ Although the Baptism of Water washes away our former guilt, yet that alone cannot prevent the return of sin. It is true, indeed, by the sacrament of Baptism, we are made heirs of God, and admitted and received into the inheritance of sons : but still, till we receive the rite of Confirmation, we are but *Babes in Christ* in the literal sense ; we are merely infants, that can do nothing, not able to resist the least violence or opposition, but lie exposed to every assault, and in danger of being foiled by every temptation. Baptism conveys the Holy Ghost only as the spirit or principle of life ; it is by Confirmation he becomes to us the spirit of strength, and enables us to stir and move ourselves. When we are baptized, we are only listed under the banner of Christ, marked for his soldiers, and sworn to be faithful ; and not till Confirmation

view is overcharged, I would refer him to Hooker's Eccl. Polity, b. v. c. lxvi. and b. vii. vi. 4. Palmer's Antiquity of the English Ritual, vol. 2, p. 198-207. Potter on Church Government, p. 245, &c. Oxford Tracts, tract xliii., 12-14. Jones's Works, vol. 3, p. 400. Bishop Seabury on, in British Critic, Oct. 1839, p. 312. London Christian Observer, 1838, p. 369. Bethel on Regeneration, p. 85, 86. The Candidate for Confirmation Instructed, by Bishop Hobart.

equipped for the battle or furnished with arms to withstand the enemy. It is then, also, that we are sealed with the Lord's signature, marked, as it were, for God's sheep, and so secured from being stolen by robbers."

The General Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union have just published a little book, called Susan Harvey, which we find highly commended by a correspondent of the Episcopal Recorder. The narrative, judging from the article in question, is well adapted to produce a favorable impression upon the youthful mind in relation to Festivals and Saints' days. And the great burden that rested upon her mind in prospect of death was that she *had not been confirmed*. "Now, you know," says she, "I have never been confirmed: and it is so on my mind always that if I should not live to be confirmed, I should not be able to receive the holy communion: and then how should I be able to *pass through the fire*, if I have not part in my blessed Saviour?"

Her female spiritual instructor does not appear able to answer her question, only by telling her that her pastor did not know that she was at home, else he would have called to see her.

And he, when he did come, does not appear to direct her to the Saviour, but merely to "keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in them the remainder of her life," and to encourage her that she might yet live to be "visibly admitted to all the privileges of a child of God, and be sealed by his Holy Spirit in the view of the visible church." What is here meant will be better understood when the reader is told that as the day approached when the bishop was to perform the rite of Confirmation, poor Susan feared that "she might not live to *feel the pressure of the hands of God's Great Shepherd which was to seal to her the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and render her body meet to partake of the body and blood of Him* through whose death alone she had hope of life."

Now, in contradistinction to all this, the Presbyterian church affirms and teaches that there is no other confirmation than that almighty work of the Divine Spirit by which he strengthens, comforts, and establishes believers in faith and obedience,¹ and which he worketh when, and where, and how, he will. They believe,

¹ 1 Pet. 5. 10. 1 Cor. 1. 8.

however, to use the words of Calvin,¹ in the propriety of "the custom which was practised among the ancients before this abortive image of a sacrament made its appearance. For it was not such a confirmation as the Romanists pretend, which cannot be mentioned without injury to baptism; but a catechetical exercise, in

¹ Instit. b. iv. ch. xix. § xiii., vol. 2, p. 542. Eng. ed. In proof of the fact that the practice here alluded to was approved of by Calvin and the reformed churches generally, and that it is grounded on Scripture example and teaching, and is in many ways eminently useful and necessary, I have offered proof in my volume of Tracts on Presbyterianism, No. 3, "A Form of Public Christian Profession Scriptural," &c., p. 47; and which, as it has never been confuted, I hold to be sufficient to authorize the adoption of it where it is now neglected. It was practised by all branches of the reformed churches; by Calvin, by the Genevan, and the French churches, and in some substantial form by the Presbyterian church in England, Ireland, and Scotland, and especially by the Seceders. The very fact, too, that the decree of the Council of Trent condemns such a practice, shows that it was then common. Further examination, too, only makes me more strong in the opinion that no pastor or session can admit members without such a form, without usurping a power never given, robbing the people of a power never abandoned, and depriving the church of a benefit which is of great advantage and profit.—See Boyser's Account of the Ancient Episcopacy, p. 220.

which children or youths used to deliver an account of their faith, in the presence of the church. Now it would be the best mode of catechetical instruction, if a formulary were written for this purpose, containing and stating, in a familiar manner, all the articles of our religion, in which the universal church of the faithful ought to agree, without any controversy : a boy of ten years of age might present himself to make a confession of his faith ; he might be questioned on all the articles, and might give suitable answers : if he were ignorant of any, or did not fully understand them, he should be taught. Thus the church would witness his profession of the only true and pure faith, in which all the people of the faithful unanimously worship the one God. If this discipline were observed in the present day, it would certainly sharpen the inactivity of some parents, who carelessly neglect the instruction of their children, as a thing in which they have no concern, but which in that case they could not omit without public disgrace : there would be more harmony of faith among Christian people, nor would many betray such great ignorance and want of information : some would not be so

easily carried away with novel and strange tenets; in short, all would have a regular acquaintance with Christian doctrine."

SECTION III.

Confirmation implies the truth of the doctrine of Apostolical Succession, and is therefore unscriptural.

WHAT then, I now ask, is implied in this Romish and prelatical doctrine of confirmation? It implies first, the prelatical doctrine of apostolical succession, for it is to be administered only by prelates; and the grace believed to be conferred by it can only be imparted by the hands of one who has received the plenitude of episcopal grace through the mysterious channel of an uninterrupted personal descent from the apostles, and a divine communication of their authority and office. This is no caricature of mine. On the contrary, "it is needful," says the Catechism of the Council of Trent,¹ "to teach who are the true and lawful ministers thereof, that the faithful may have the very sa-

¹ Page 107.

orament and grace of confirmation. The Holy Scriptures therefore show that **THE BISHOP ONLY** has the ordinary power of making this sacrament." To teach or affirm contrary to this, is to draw down upon us anathema and excommunication, and therefore damnation.¹

Wheatley, on behalf of the prelacy, confirms this opinion, by declaring that "the minister of confirmation **MUST** be a bishop," "for which reason the honor of dispensing this holy ordinance was **ALWAYS** reserved to the ministry of **THE BISHOPS.**"² Archbishop Potter affirms the same thing, and assures those who are willing to take his word for it, that "the Scriptures describe confirmation not as a temporary institution, but one which is **FUNDAMENTAL TO CHRISTIANITY, AND CONSEQUENTLY LASTING AND PERPETUAL.**"³

Now this doctrine of apostolical succession, as I have endeavored to prove in my volume on that subject, is a pure fabrication of the hierarchy after it had corrupted the church; usurped the rights of the true clergy, who were declared

¹ See the decree above.

² On the Common Prayer, p. 394.

³ On Church Government, p. 246-249.

to be "*inferior*" (!) and entirely dependant on the prelate for their being and authority; and when it had trampled on the ecclesiastical rights of the laity, and utterly expelled them from their free-born inheritance, and their spiritual citizenship. Of this doctrine I have declared, and am prepared to maintain against all opposers, first, that it is not even pretended that it can be found in Scripture. It is *granted* by its advocates that it is not clearly revealed in the word of God; but that it depends upon tradition, and the authority of the fathers.¹ The doctrine, on the contrary, is actually denounced by Christ; and is opposed to Scripture declarations, warnings, and precepts; to its promises and prophecies; to its facts and decisions, and to the one and only remaining commission of the ministry.² Secondly, that this personal succession cannot be shown to have existed in a valid and unbroken chain. For in order to do this, it must be proved that the ordination of every prelate in this entire succession was valid, first, as to the form of ordination; secondly, as to the

¹ See full proof of this position in author's Lectures, pp. 73, 83, 87, 99, 103, 133, 134, 136.

² See *ibid*, lect. vi. and vii.

subject of ordination; and thirdly, as to the ministers of ordination; which is altogether an impossibility.¹ Thirdly, that this personal succession cannot be proved as a historical fact. It cannot be proved that the apostle Peter, the first link in this chain, was ever at Rome at all, or that he was ever bishop of Rome, or that he ever appointed a successor to himself, as such. Neither can it be decided whether there were one or two bishops originally at Rome, nor who were the first successors in that church; while it is certain that many invalidities have occurred in the progress of this succession, both in its Romish, Anglican, and American branches, and also in all the other prelatic churches; and that it has been broken in numerous instances, and in innumerable ways.²

Fourthly, I have shown that prelates are not in any proper sense successors of the apostles. Prelates are not successors to the apostles *in fact*. They are not apostles, in the true sense of this *title*, which was limited to the twelve; nor in their *call*, which was immediately from Christ; nor in their *endowments* for their office,

¹ See author's Lectures, lect. v.

² See *ibid*, lect. viii. and ix.

which were supernatural; nor in their *office itself*, which was the oversight and instruction of the whole world; nor in their *duties*, which involved the indoctrination, care, and government of ALL the churches.¹

Fifthly, this doctrine cannot be sustained on the ground of reason. It is in truth most unreasonable, inasmuch as it substitutes the theory of man for the word of God; the visible organization and ministry of the church, for spiritual Christianity; ordinances, rites, and forms, for doctrines and inward graces; the authority of the church, for the supremacy and headship of Christ; and the means of attaining salvation, by giving efficacy to the truth, for that salvation itself.²

Sixthly, this doctrine necessarily leads to popery, because it invests the church with all authority; because it subjugates the laity and the ministry to prelates; because it consigns to these prelates the interpretation of the word of God; because it has ever formed the basis upon which the system of popery rests its exclusive assumptions; because, wherever it has been carried out,

¹ See author's Lectures, lect. x.

² See *ibid*, lect. xiv.

it has led to the introduction of the corrupt doctrines and practices of the Romish church ; and because it is now leading extensively to the same results.¹

Seventhly, this doctrine leads to intolerance in spirit and in practice, as is proved from its history in all past ages ; from the character and doings of many ancient and modern prelates ; from its necessary tendency to exclude the laity from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction ; to consolidate a spiritual despotism ; and to claim absolute authority over the persons, conduct, and opinions of its adherents ; from its bitter, sectarian, and uncharitable spirit towards all other denominations ; and from its clear opposition to civil and religious liberty.²

Eighthly, I have objected to this doctrine because it necessarily implies that the church of Rome is truly catholic, apostolical, and indefectible in doctrine and practice, and that all other churches, being excommunicated by it, are cut off from the church of Christ ; and because it is schismatical, leading its abettors, like the ancient heretics, to cut themselves off from all

¹ See author's Lectures, lect. xi. and xii.

² See *ibid*, lect. xiii.

other Christians; to assert that they alone constitute **THE** catholic church of Christ, and to deny to all other branches of the church either a valid ministry or efficacious ordinances; and because it is thus contradictory to the charity, to the spirituality, and to the divine character of the gospel.¹

Nor is this doctrine rejected by us because such claims might be advanced only by prelatists. On the contrary, Presbyterians might far more reasonably urge these claims. For as **ALL THEIR MINISTERS ARE BISHOPS**; as their bishops, at the reformation, were ordained by those in authority; as they can undeniably trace their succession upward through the Romish, the Waldensian, and the Culdee churches, to the very time of the apostles; and as in the apostles' time bishops were presbyters, and acted under the one and only commission given by divine appointment; it is therefore plain, that while their ministerial succession is certain and unquestionable, that of prelates never can be established.

Finally, I have shown that the assertion, that this unbroken succession of prelates is essential

¹ See author's Lectures, lect. xv. xvii. xviii. and xix.

to a true church; to a true ministry, and to all hope of covenanted mercy, would destroy ALL EXISTING CHURCHES, and thus, all hope of salvation; since there is no church which can establish such a succession. It also fosters pride and ambition among the clergy; lukewarmness, formality, and hypocrisy among the laity; and carnality, contention and animosity among *all* Protestant denominations. It strengthens popery, by conceding its essential principles and its most arrogant demands; and it strengthens infidelity, by implicating Christianity in a doctrine which is in itself unscriptural, in its tendency hurtful, in its evidence baseless, and in its reasoning absurd.

Were it necessary, I might show the dangerous character of this doctrine in undermining all faith in spiritual influences, and in the truth, power, and efficacy of the gospel.¹ But recent events are surely sufficient to convince any impartial mind of the fact I have stated. For have we not seen that the belief of this abstract dogma has been sufficient to outweigh plain and

¹ See this done by Professor Powell of Oxford, in his *Tradition Unveiled*, and especially in the supplement to that work.

positive testimony to the open and scandalous immorality of a prelate who had received the communication of this imaginary prelatical grace? Have not several prelates, many clergy, and many also of the laity of the Episcopal church, declared that such was their faith in this doctrine, and *therefore* in the gracious and holy character of the convicted culprit, (and to some extent self-convicted and avowedly guilty!) that the character, veracity, honor, and chastity of respectable ladies are all to be sacrificed for the sake of cloaking mitred infamy, and upholding the indefectible character of the prelatical succession? Such open and public prostitution of reason and propriety to the maintenance of sectarian bigotry and exclusive assumptions, demonstrate how powerful is this baneful doctrine to corrupt and demoralize the heart, and to lead, as in innumerable cases it has done, to open skepticism and infidelity. O yes; and when we see a secret tribunal of prelates sitting in judgment upon *themselves*; barring the door, as far as possible, against all light; dragging ladies to their bar, whose testimony was not to be believed on oath, under pain of excommunication, and when they have sacrificed their own reputation and modesty

by submitting to such inquisitorial and unwarrantable cross-examination, to have it proclaimed by all true lovers of "THE CHURCH" that the guilty man was innocent, and these innocent receivers of his insults guilty ;—it is high time for public opinion to set the seal of its reprobation upon a doctrine so prolific of evil, and so dangerous even to the morals of the community.¹

But if this is so, then of course the rite of confirmation,—which implies, and depends for its very existence upon, *the truth and certainty* of this doctrine, and could only have been matured when this dogma was adopted,—must fall with it to the ground, as equally unscriptural and baseless. And so argues Lightfoot, himself an Episcopalian, who gives four arguments to show that confirmation could not be meant by the passages adduced for its support in Acts 8. 17, because the apostleship was a temporary office.²

¹ Look at the influence, too, of this doctrine upon one of the ladies in question, when she could calmly reason with the insulter while in the act of guilt, by telling him that that SACRED hand of HIS, which was then acting as the instrument of lustful passion, had been upon the head of some of her friends.

² Lightfoot's Works, vol. viii. p. 125, &c. And here we have another example of the gross fabrication of prelatists in

And thus also argues Calvin, who says,¹ "But if any one inquire of them how such a prerogative has been conferred on bishops, what reason will they assign but their own pleasure? They allege, that the apostles alone exercised that right, being the sole dispensers of the Holy Spirit. Are bishops the only apostles; or are they apostles at all? Let us, however, grant that also:

order to sustain their cause. Lightfoot's words are, "*Utrum apostolatus ordo et dignitas non cum ipsis apostolis, nunquam amplius imitanda, in perpetuum desiisse censenda est?*" That is, "It may fairly be questioned whether the order and dignity of the apostleship is not to be regarded as having for ever terminated with the apostles themselves, neither is any longer to be imitated." And yet this the *learned* editor, the Rev. John Rogers Pitman, says "*is obscure,*" and therefore, by way of making it plain, he edits it, "First whether apostleship were not an order for ever, (the comma here separates the words,) inimitable in the church;" i. e. unapproachable in its elevated greatness. Thus does Lightfoot tell the English reader the very *reverse* of what he tells the reader of his own words, and thus, too, is Calvin made to father opinions the very opposite of his real sentiments.

¹ Institutes, b. iv. ch. xix. § x. p. 540. And yet this is the man who is paraded as an authority in proof of the truth and propriety of confirmation, by all the prelati- cal writers on the subject. See Wheatley and others. We shall see more of his sentiments in a moment.

why do they not on the same principle contend that none but bishops ought to touch the sacrament of the blood in the Lord's supper ; which they refuse to the laity, because the Lord, as they say, only gave it to the apostles ? If our Lord gave it to the apostles alone, why do they not infer, therefore it ought now to be given to bishops alone ? But in this case they make the apostles simple presbyters ; now they are hurried away with an extravagant notion suddenly to create them bishops. Lastly, Ananias was not an apostle ; yet to him Paul was sent, that he might receive his sight, be baptized, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. I will add one question more : If this was the peculiar office of bishops by a divine right, why have they dared to transfer it to common presbyters ; as we read in one of the epistles of Gregory ?"

SECTION IV.

Confirmation implies the institution of Christ and his Apostles, which is disproved, and Acts 8. 14-17, &c. examined.

BUT I have said that confirmation also implies the institution of Christ and his apostles, and

this we think can be as clearly proved to be wanting as the former. Both arguments constitute, as it were, the two limbs upon which the body of this assumed rite stands. One of these we have shown to be wanting, and the rite is, to say the least, very crippled; and if the other is found equally deficient we may well conclude that He who gave even the body of man limbs strong enough to bear him up, would not leave an ordinance of his own church crippled and maimed, yea, destitute of limbs altogether.

I affirm, then, that for confirmation, as it is held by Romanists and prelatists, there is no foundation in the New Testament, nor any proof that it was instituted by Christ or his apostles.

That it was not instituted by Christ is manifest, since he employed the imposition of hands only in the exercise of his own personal prerogative in communicating his blessing, or in restoring such as were diseased. Nothing, however, occurs in his personal history from which it could be inferred that he empowered his ministers to institute and perpetuate the ordinance of confirmation. There are, it is true, passages which have been *thought* sufficient to prove that the apostles, under divine direction, did administer

this rite, and that prelates as their successors, are still therefore authorized to perpetuate it in the church.

The first of these passages is found in Acts 8. 14-17, where it is recorded, "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." That we may properly understand this passage, it must be remembered that the gifts of the Holy Ghost were twofold—ordinary and extraordinary. The ordinary gifts were common to all believers—such as the sanctifying influences of the Spirit—but the extraordinary gifts were gifts bestowed upon particular persons, for particular purposes; such as those given to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. "They were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance," Acts 2. 4. In the Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle mentions the extraordinary gifts of

the Spirit. (See 1 Cor. 12. 4-11.) Here he gives a catalogue of the extraordinary spiritual gifts with which the first ministers and teachers of Christianity were blessed. Now those extraordinary gifts and powers were essentially necessary in the first ages, for the conviction of unbelievers, the confutation of heretics, and the speedy propagation of the gospel. They tended to facilitate as well as to accelerate the spread of Christianity; and it was for this reason that the apostle, when he came to Antioch, procured these extraordinary gifts for twelve men, who became the pastors or elders of the church at Ephesus. (See Acts 19. 1-7; also, Acts 20. 28.) Wherever the apostles made converts to Christianity, it was invariably their practice to select some persons from the converts, on whom they conferred the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, by the imposition of hands; and those persons immediately became qualified to fill the pastoral office, and, as such, were appointed by the apostles to feed and govern the infant church. Now this is precisely what the apostles did in Samaria, as mentioned in the passage before us. God had wonderfully owned Philip as an evangelist in Samaria, so that numbers, through his preaching, were converted to the faith of the

gospel. It was then necessary to appoint ministers and pastors over the church at Samaria, and this could only be done by the apostles—for to them was reserved the power of conferring the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; therefore, when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they arrived, laid their hands upon some members of that church, and immediately they received the Holy Ghost, that is, the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; and began to speak with tongues and to prophesy. It is true, it is not expressly mentioned in this passage that they began to prophesy and to speak with tongues; yet it is evident that they did, from the fact of Simon Magus wanting to purchase from them the gift of conferring the Holy Ghost. "And when Simon saw that, through the laying on of the hands of the apostles, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money," Acts 8. 18. *And when Simon saw!* Is it not evident, then, that those persons spake with tongues and prophesied? And does not the

¹ See a letter on this subject, by the Rev. Mr. Godkin, published in an Irish newspaper.

very word "fallen" teach the same thing, referring, as it does, to the remarkable occurrence related in a preceding chapter, when "on the day of Pentecost there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." This is made still more evident by what is said in chapter 19. 5, 6, of this same book, where it is related of the Ephesian disciples, that when they heard the apostle "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." So also it is said in Acts 5. 12-16, "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by

might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one." These Samaritan disciples, be it remembered, had already believed and been baptized by Philip, and of course with Christian baptism. They had, therefore, already received "the *ordinary* grace of the Holy Spirit," and needed not to receive it again a second time; and hence what they now received must have been His *extra-ordinary* gifts. This the phrase employed indicates, which is a Rabinnical form of speech, and when not applied to the third person in the Trinity is "very common," says Lightfoot,¹ "in the writings of the Jews, and in the use of that nation; and evermore in their use and sense meaneth only the extraordinary gifts of the spirit of tongues, prophesying, and the like—so doth it constantly signify in the Scripture: and it is very hard, if not utterly impossible, to find it signifying any other sense."

Neither were *all* who were baptized, and who had professed their faith in Christ, made parta-

¹ Lightfoot's Works, vol. viii. p. 127.

kers of the supernatural signs and gifts imparted on this occasion, for Simon Magus, finding that he had not received them, immediately offered to purchase them.¹ There are other cases again where the apostles communicated these miraculous gifts without any imposition of hands, as on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2. 38-42); and there are cases of baptism by the apostles mentioned, where they neither imposed hands, nor imparted such gifts (Acts 16. 15, and Acts 16. 31-35). Neither is there any reason to believe that women ever received imposition of hands, though they *were* made partakers of these spiritual gifts by a direct influence from on high.² And hence we must conclude, that this ceremony was employed by the apostles under a divine impulse, and only when so directed; and that, as it was not given by any fixed rule, or in connexion with baptism as a regular act,³ there is neither precept nor precedent upon which any regular use of this ceremony, as a stated rite, can be founded by the church now.

¹ Lightfoot's Works, vol. viii. p. 128.

² Ibid.

³ See Lord Barrington's Works, vol. i. pp. 127, 133, and sect. xxiv. p. 141, &c.

That such is the meaning of these passages is admitted by all impartial critics, including Episcopalians. Dr. Willett, a learned Episcopal writer, gives four reasons to show that the reference here is not to confirmation, but to the bestowment of supernatural and miraculous gifts.¹ The same view is taken by many of the Lutheran reformers,² by Grotius, by Calvin,³ by Lord Barrington, who dwells at length and with great force upon the subject,⁴ by Dr. Hinds of Oxford, now chaplain to Archbishop Whately,⁵ by Mr. Riddle in his *Christian Antiquities*,⁶ by Elsley,⁷ and by Lightfoot;⁸ the Dutch Annotations,⁹ Rosenmüller,¹⁰ Kuinoel,¹¹ Wolfius,¹²

¹ *Synopsis Papism.*, p. 812.

² See the Confession of Wittenburgh, in *Harmony of Conf.*, sec. xiii. p. 409.

³ *Institutes*, b. iv, c. xix. § vi. vol. ii. p. 536, and Comment in loco.

⁴ *Theological Works*, vol. i. sec. xxi. &c., p. 109; &c.

⁵ *History of the Rise and Progress of Christianity*, vol. i. pp. 197 and 227, and vol. ii. 77-79: ⁶ P. 352.

⁷ *Elsley on the Gospels and Acts*, vol. ii. p. 406.

⁸ *Works*, vol. viii. p. 127.

⁹ *Annotations*, Lond., 1657, tom. ii. in loco.

¹⁰ *Scholia in Nov. Test.*, tom. iii. p. 198, and on Acts 6, 6, 19, 6, p. 384.

¹¹ *Commentarius in Nov. Test.*, vol. iv. p. 508 et al.

¹² *Cursus Philolog.*, tom. iv. p. 660.

Schœtgenius,¹ Koppe,² Gill,³ Adam Clarke,⁴ Scott,⁵ Beza,⁶ and Camerarius, are all of this opinion.⁷ Whitby, too, with all his prelatical prejudice and bias, is very strong. "Not," says he,⁸ "that all who had been baptized might receive it; for it was never so in any church; no, not at Jerusalem; there being only some among them full of the Holy Ghost, (Acts 6. 3,) and therefore it seems reasonable to say, with Dr. Lightfoot here, that they were such as the Holy Ghost had pointed out to be ordained ministers, or for the receiving of the prophetical gifts which enabled men then (*λειτουργοι*) to do sacred offices in the assemblies, where they were." And

¹ Schœtgenius, *Horæ Hebr. et Talmudicæ*, tom. ii. pp. 953 and 887, 888.

² *Novum Testament.*, vol. vii. p. 99.

³ *Exposition*, vol. viii. p. 222, who is of opinion that these persons, with the miraculous gifts, were ordained to the ministry.

⁴ *Commentarius in loco*. He is also of the opinion expressed by Dr. Gill.

⁵ *Commentary in loco*.

⁶ *Novum Testamentum*, Cant., 1642, folio, p. 320, on v. 15. He also refers them to the miraculous gifts given as qualifications for presiding over the church.

⁷ *Commentarius in Novum Fœdus*, Cantsbrigis, 1642, fol., p. 103, on Acts 8. 13.

⁸ *Commentary*, on Acts 8. 15.

then he adds, after dwelling on this point, "As for the other opinion, that these hands were laid on to confirm them; if hands were not laid on all that there were baptized, this makes nothing for confirmation; if they were, then Simon Magus must be confirmed, and receive the Holy Ghost. And both these opinions seem dangerous on this account, that the Holy Ghost was never thus conferred but by the hands of an apostle; and consequently, if confirmation and ordination be laid on this foundation, they may be said to cease with the apostles."

Diodati, the "learned professor of Theology" with whom Milton held daily conference at Geneva, confirms the opinions expressed above.¹ Henry, takes the same view.² Such also is the view taken by Clarius,³ Grotius,⁴ Benson,⁵ Piscator,⁶ Poole,⁷ and Planck.⁸

¹ Annotations upon the Whole Bible, Lond., 1651, on Acts 8. 15, and Milton's Works, vol. i. p. 82.

² Commentary upon Acts 8. 15.

³ Critici Sacri, Amstel., tom. viii. p. 160. ⁴ Ib. p. 178.

⁵ See History of the First Planting of Christianity, vol. i. c. i. sect. iii. p. 138, &c., and p. 66, &c.

⁶ See in Poole's Synopsis, on Acts 8. 15.

⁷ Annotations upon the Bible, Lond., 1685, tom. ii., on Acts 8. 15.

⁸ See in Goleman's Primitive Church, p. 297.

There is nothing, therefore, in the case before us analagous to confirmation, but every thing contrary to it. The ministers, in this case, were extraordinary, and are not now represented by any officers in the church, in that apostolic and supernatural character in which they acted. The gifts imparted were also extraordinary, and are not now found in the church, whereas the object of confirmation, says Bishop Hobart, is to secure "the ordinary grace of the Holy Spirit." And these gifts were imparted in answer to prayer, (see v. 15,) and conferred by the Holy Spirit, and not by any imposition of hands, which was merely an outward symbol of authority and power, which the apostles had special commandment to use.¹ And since therefore the authority, the gifts, and the office have all ceased, there remains neither institution nor commandment to employ imposition of hands, in the order of confirmation.

We are willing to bring this matter to the test of a principle which is laid down by one of the greatest advocates for the divine right and fun-

¹ See Willett's Synopsis, p. 812, 813. Such also was the opinion of the Master of the Sentences, as quoted by him at p. 817.

damental character of confirmation. I mean Bishop Jeremy Taylor. Speaking of extreme unction he says, "When the miraculous healing ceased, then they were not Catholics, but heretics that did transfer it to the use of dying persons." Now by this rule let those be judged who still enforce the necessity of imposition of hands by pretended successors of the apostles,—who can neither show the calling, the qualifications and the gifts of an apostle, nor in any way impart the miraculous gifts which in their case accompanied the imposition of hands,—and may we not say of them what their great defender has said in an exactly parallel case, that since the miraculous effects of apostolic imposition of hands have ceased, then "they are not Catholics, but heretics, who now transfer that empty sign to the use of young persons, and thus delude their minds by the belief that, with it, they have received divine and heavenly grace."

I would dismiss the consideration of these cases, then, by proposing the following dilemma: Either the Holy Ghost and all his gifts and graces are conferred by confirmation, or they are not. If they are, why is it that they are not now as visible and manifest as they were in apostolic

days? Why do their recipients give no evidence of their possession, either in their speech, their powers, or even in their lives? Why is it that, even, according to Dr. Pusey, the instances of those who have been faithful to this grace are "EXCEEDINGLY rare." So that "there is a FEARFUL AND ALL BUT UNIVERSAL DEFECTION AMONG THEM"?¹ And why is it that while the inhabitants of Roman Catholic countries have universally received both the grace of baptism and the grace of confirmation, they are nevertheless distinguished above all others for their gracelessness, and for their abuse of divine grace to licentiousness, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, fornication, adultery, and open infidelity,² so that whether you travel in Ireland or in Switzerland, you can trace the limits of Romanism and Protestantism by the presence or the absence of morality, industry, intelligence, and piety?

On the other hand, if, as is thus manifest, con-

¹ See his *Present Crisis*, p. 14.

² The testimony of Palmer, author of the *Treatise on the Church*, will be regarded as about as impartial as could well be given. See vol. i. pp. 344-349, 289, 300. See also Blanco White's evidence against Catholicism, who was himself a Spanish priest.

firmation does not confer the Holy Ghost or his gifts and graces, why then, in the name of common honesty, does any church now attempt to go through a ceremony for which there is no countenance or support in the word of God ; no command ; no sign ; no promise ; and no precedent capable of imitation ? Why, like Simon Magus, make gain for the prelatie grace and dignity and asserted supremacy of a *priesthood*, by enforcing the belief in gifts and graces which can never be SEEN, FELT, or PROVED ? And how can a ceremony which thus deludes multitudes with the hope of salvation and security—when God and their own consciences tell them that for them there is no peace, and that they are yet in their sins—be freed from the serious charge of open impiety and guilt ?

SECTION V.

Acts 14. 22, examined.

ANOTHER passage which is supposed to teach the apostolic appointment of the rite of confirmation is Acts 14. 22, where it is said that Paul and Barnabus went “ to Lystra, and to Iconium,

and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith." So also in Acts 15. 41, they are reported as "confirming the churches." And so also Judas and Silas, "being prophets themselves," "exhorted the brethren with many words and confirmed them." Acts 15. 32. Here indeed we find *the word* "confirmed," and this with many is proof positive of the *thing*, since they are led not by the sense but by the sound. So we have seen it is with the word bishop, which is to many an ample demonstration of the scriptural institution of the *prelatical* order of bishops; whereas it really means throughout the New Testament the order of *presbyters* or pastors. Now it is to be remembered that the reference of the word "*confirm*" to the ecclesiastical rite is of modern origin, and very remote from the true and proper meaning of the term, which signifies "to put past doubt by new evidence, and thus to establish;" and hence the application of the word to the ecclesiastical rite is given by Dr. Johnson as the *eighth* and *last* signification of the word.

The Greek word used in these passages is analogous to confirmation, in its *original* mean-

ing, signifying "to place firmly upon a foundation," and thus to establish or build up. Hence Tyndale, in 1534, renders the word by the term "strengthen," which rendering is followed by Archbishop Cranmer in "the great Bible," published by authority in A. D. 1539.¹ The restoration, therefore, of the word "*confirm*" by the translators of the authorized version, A. D. 1611, must be regarded—like the use of the word "easter" for passover, "elder" for presbyter, "overseers" for the term bishops, where the connexion would prove that this office and its duties belong to presbyters,²—as intended by these men, who were all prelatists, and who were required to retain "old ecclesiastical words," and in any case they thought doubtful "to keep that signification most commonly retained by the most eminent fathers," as much as possible to favor prelacy and put down Presbyterianism. For not only were *all* the translators

¹ See in the English Hexapla on the passages.

² See Acts 20. 28, see v. 17. So in 1 Peter, v. 2, "the bishopric," or "the office of a bishop," is rendered "*oversight*," because v. 1 shows that it belonged to "presbyters," who are therefore called "*elders*," more effectually to blind the reader.

chosen from the prelacy, although the petition for the new version came from the Presbyterians, and was at first opposed by Archbishop Bancroft; but their version was subsequently "reviewed by the bishops," including Bancroft, who introduced several alterations, and by Bilson, who had written a work against the Presbyterians; and last of all, was submitted to the privy council and to King James, who had abjured his own repeated oath in favor of Presbyterianism, and had now of course become its most deadly enemy.¹ Indeed in the preface to the

¹ See Jameson's History of the Culdees, p. 330. Johnson's Hist. of English Translations of Bible in Watson's Tracts, and Hist. Acct. prefixed to the English Hexapla, London, 1841; pp. 149, 151-159. See also any history of the times. As to King James's perjury take the following proof. In 1590, (McCrie's Life of Melville, vol. i. p. 385, 386,) at a meeting of the General Assembly, "He praised God that he was born in such a time, as in the time of the light of the gospel, and in such a place, as to be king in such a kirk, the purest kirk in the world." "The kirk of Geneva (continued his Majesty) keepeth Pasch and Yule. What have they for them? They have no institution. As for our own neighbor kirk in England, their service is AN EVIL-SAID MASS in English; they want nothing of the mass but the lifings. I charge you, my good people, ministers, doctors, elders, nobles, gentlemen, and barons, to

reader, the Translators candidly avow that they

stand to your purity ; and I, forsooth, so long as I brook my life and crown, shall maintain the same against all deadly." (Cald. iv. 198, 204.)

When Bancroft represented that James had dissembled in giving his testimony, the learned king "took an opportunity (Life of Melville, i. 392) of contradicting the insinuation of Bancroft, that he dissembled in the concessions which he had lately made in favor of presbytery."

In 1598, in an apologetical preface to his *Doron*, James, speaking of the ministers of Scotland, says (Life of Melville, vol. ii. p. 163, 164), "There is presently a sufficient number of good men of them in this kingdom ; and yet are they ALL known to be against the form of the English Church?" And again, speaking of the charge of Puritanism, he says : "I protest upon mine honour that I mean it not generally of all preachers, or others, that like better of the single form of policy in our church, than of the many ceremonies of the Church of England, that are persuaded that their bishops smell of a papal supremacy, that the surplice, cornered cap, and such like, are the outward badges of popish errors. No, I am so far from being contentious in these things (which for my own part I ever esteemed indifferent), as I do equally love and honour the learned and grave men of either of these opinions. It can no ways become me to pronounce so lightly a sentence in so old a controversy."

In the same year, 1598, at the Assembly, James solemnly and repeatedly (Life of Melville, vol. ii. 132,) protested (with what truth it is now unnecessary to say,) that

sought to steer a course between popery and puritanism.

We are not, therefore, to be carried away by the mere wind of empty sound, from the plain and palpable meaning of these passages, which manifestly refer to that inward and spiritual comfort and edification which were imparted by the miraculous gifts to these infant and persecuted churches. Who ever heard of prelatical confirmation without imposition of hands? and

he had no intention to introduce either popish or Anglican bishops, but that his sole object was that some of the best and wisest of the ministry, chosen by the General Assembly, should have a place in the privy council and parliament, to sit in judgment on their own affairs, and not to stand, as they had too long stood, at the door, like poor suppliants, disregarded and despised." Such were the avowed declarations of James; and yet, as if to demonstrate the truth of Scripture, when it shows the folly of putting confidence in princes, and when it declares that "*men of high degree are a lie*," he was at this time privately circulating in his *Doron* the most opposite sentiments (Melville, p. 162), and was willing afterwards to proclaim to the world his own base perjury and shameless deceit (see his Premonition to the Apol. for the Death of Allegiance, *ibid.* p. 164). In Bancroft, however, he found a fitting counsellor.

who, by any effort of ingenuity, can find any allusion to imposition of hands here? Or can any other than a prelate confirm?—and yet we here find Judas and Silas, two simple presbyters, confirming the brethren.¹ On the whole, then, we must conclude, with Archbishop Whately,² that while it is true that “some who would be ashamed to employ such an argument for confirmation themselves, might yet be tempted to leave it uncontradicted, from a doubt of being able to substitute a sound one, which should be, to that individual, equally satisfactory.”

This he justly enumerates among the pious frauds by which even Protestant jesuitism and sectarian zeal will advance a weak and defenceless cause. For, he adds, “Let us imagine a case of some one desirous to receive, and induce others to receive, the rite of confirmation, from supposing it alluded to and enjoined, in the passage of Scripture which describes an apostle as going through a certain region “confirming the churches;” should we venture to attempt re-

¹ Ananias, who was but a disciple, laid hands also on Paul, Acts, 9. 11. Lord Barrington's Wks. vol. i. p. 127.

² Origin of Romish Errors, p. 161, ch. iii., Eng. ed.

moving his conviction from this false basis, and replacing it on a sound one?" "Our separation, therefore," he further adds, "from the Church of Rome does not place us (nor can we ever be placed in this life) in a situation which exempts us from all danger of falling into corruptions—among the rest, the justification of pious frauds—substantially similar to those with which that church is so justly reproached." I will only add one other testimony. "The great apostle," says Dr. Burton,¹ "travelled through Syria and Cilicia; and the expression used by St. Luke of his *confirming the churches* in those countries, proves that he must have planted these churches at an earlier period. He now confirmed them: i. e. he gave them such regulations as were necessary for their welfare. Wherever deacons were wanted, he ordained them; he appointed others to the office of elders; and there can be little doubt, that to some or all of these ministers he imparted those miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which were so useful for the instruction of the converts, and

¹ Lectures upon the Eccl. Hist. of the First Three Cent., Lect. vi. Oxf., 1839; and see also vol. i. p. 95, Lect. iv.

furnished such convincing evidence of the gospel."

SECTION VI.

Heb. 6. 1, 2, examined.

WE proceed, therefore, to notice the only other passage quoted in proof of confirmation, as a permanent and fundamental rite of the church, and that is Heb. 6. 1, 2, where the apostle enumerates among the principles which constituted first principles in the catechetical instruction of religious inquirers, who were seeking their way from heathenism and Judaism into the light and liberty of the gospel of Christ, the following doctrines—of repentance, of baptism, of laying on of hands, of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. The doctrine concerning each and all of these, that is, their nature and design, their relation to Christianity and to the salvation of men, this the apostle considered as the very alphabet, or axiomatic principles, with which the inquirer (or, as he was technically called, the catechumen) ought to be made acquainted and be familiar.

These are not "the meat and drink," "the wine and strong meat," which were to be given to those who had become "men in Christ Jesus," but "the milk" and pap which were to be administered to those who were still but "babes in Christ." Such persons having sat under the teaching of the schoolmaster, and imbibed the rudiments of Christian education, were to go on unto perfection, and to the complete development of that hope set before us in the gospel (v. 18), and which alone, like an anchor of immutable security and strength, can hold fast the soul amid all the swelling floods of temptation and sin. The apostle, therefore, does not magnify these principles, but shows that they are "in order to goodness," and that they are valuable only as they lead to the sanctification of the soul. Instead, therefore, of making them—supposing for a moment that they do contain the doctrine of the church—its sacraments and its order, the very essentials of faith and salvation, and the very channels of heavenly grace, he calls upon his readers to look beyond these for that justification, sanctification, and complete redemption, which are to be found in Christ; and warns them that a man may have

become partaker of all the knowledge and ordinances and privileges here enumerated or implied, and yet fall away, and crucify to himself the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (v. 6). And that church, therefore, which makes these things take pre-eminence of the doctrines of grace, and the life and practice of holy devotedness to Christ, has never got beyond the porch and outer wall of Christianity, and is still found feeding its children with the milk of babes, the husks, hay, and stubble which can never invigorate or impart spiritual strength. And hence it is, says Cartwright, that even "their *confirmed* persons are always such babes, and so *infirm* that they can never learn to call God, Abba, Father, but are always like a shaken reed, and like the waves of the sea which are moved by the winds," having no root in themselves, and looking, like craven and hungry dependents, for very food and life to their priestly guides.

But can these words, we ask, in *any way* refer to confirmation? Assuredly not. For in such a ceremony, and for *the purpose* now attributed to confirmation, we have found no use made of imposition of hands in the word of God. In

imparting miraculous gifts and healing diseases, we do find it used by Christ and the apostles, and by **THEM ALONE**; but as a ceremony perfecting baptism and imparting a grace which baptism promises or gives, **NEVER**. On the contrary "Christ baptized not," and Paul baptized little, and even among the few cases of apostolic baptism there was no connexion with such a ceremony as imposition of hands. Besides these cases in which imposition of hands was employed, we find this ceremony used by *ordinary presbyters*, the pastors of the churches, as at Antioch, and at the ordination of Timothy, in introducing ministers into their sacred office.¹ As a rite whereby, accompanied with solemn prayer, benediction and official designation, ministers were set apart and invested with authority to teach, and as thus signifying the whole doctrine of the church, its ministry and its authorized proclamation of the gospel, and whatsoever things Christ has commanded in his word—in this sense, "the laying on of hands," must here be understood. The words cannot refer to baptism, of which, for ages, confirmation was an

¹ See these passages fully explained in *Presbytery and Prelacy*, pp. 129, 174, and 187, &c.

immediate accompaniment, for then would baptism alone, like Pharaoh's lean kine, swallow up the fat kine of that very church and ministry, of which it is but *one* ordinance, and that, the initiatory one; because, further, "we know of a certainty" that in some cases imposition of hands *did not* accompany baptism, as in that of the thousands at the day of Pentecost, of Cornelius, of the Ethiopian eunuch, of the jailor, of Lydia, and of others; and finally, it cannot refer to baptism, because many are of opinion that between the words "baptisms" and "laying on of hands," the word *διδασκη* should be inserted, and constitute another principle, to express that catechetical instruction by which converts were prepared for full membership in the church of Christ.¹

To apply these words to the present ceremony of confirmation is, therefore, a glaring presumption, and an imposition upon the word of God. No instance of laying on of hands, in such a sense, can be found in the whole Bible. Facts there stated prove, contrariwise, that this rite

¹ So Erasmus and the Greek Scholiasts. See Gillespie's *Miscellany Questions*, p. 21. See Hey's *Lect. on Divinity*, vol. ii. p. 460.

was not invariably connected with baptism by the apostles, as it was universally when first used in the church at a subsequent period. And the very sense and bearing of the passage demand that the rite, as indicating and holding forth the ministry of the church, and its whole economy and value, should be here understood in accordance with the weight and authority of all impartial and critical inquirers.¹ "It is most probable,"

¹ Stuart on the Hebrews, vol. ii. p. 198. McLean on the Hebrews, Wks., vol. v. p. 188. Gillespie's Miscellany Questions, p. 21. Cartwright's Confut. of the Rhemists, pp. 606, 607. Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry, pt. i. pp. 175-177. Dr. Ames in his Bellarminus Enervatus, tom. ii. p. 76, who refers it to the *totum ministerium*. Bullinger also confirms this in loco. Riddle's Christian Antiquities, p. 532. See also a Dissertation on, in Walch's Miscellanea Sacra on the Catechetical Instruction of the Apostles, to be seen in the Biblical Repertory for 1827. Suiceri Thesaurus under the word, tom. ii. pp. 1514-1516. Spanheim Diatrib. de Impos. Manuum, tom. ii. p. 871.—Bloomfield, in his Greek Test. and Crit. Digest. vol. viii. p. 443, ascribes to the best commentators, ancient and modern, the opinion that it refers to the symbol then used of the spiritual gifts vouchsafed to many, and of whose nature they should be informed, and as this accompanied, in his opinion, baptism, it could not of course refer to confirmation. See Greek Test., vol. ii. p. 491. Wolfi Co-

says Walch,¹ "that the *ἐπιθεσις χειρῶν*, which the apostle in this place mentions, refers to the ordination of the church ministry: since it is evident, as we learn from 1 Tim. 4. 14, and v. 22, and 2 Tim. 1. 6, that the sacred office was solemnly conferred by the *laying on of hands*. Hence the phrase, *laying on of hands* is here used for the ordination, or the constitution itself of the church ministry, as in this sense the term is elsewhere employed. The apostle Paul himself, in those passages just quoted, uses the term to denote the constitution of the church ministry; and it occurs also in the same signification among ecclesiastical writers." "In the enumeration of these heads of instruction, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the doctrine of the church ministry very properly succeeds that of baptism. For those who were baptized ought

ræ Phil., tom. iv. p. 660. Rosenmüller Scholia in Nov. Test., tom. v. pp. 208, and 45, 46. Koppe in Nov. Test., vol. viii. p. 99. Kuinoel Comment. in Epist. ad Heb., p. 177.

¹ See as above referred to, pp. 61, 63. Of the same opinion are Schmidius, Boltenius, Carpsovius, in Kuinoel in loco. Gill, in his Commentary (see on Acts, 8. 17), thinks that even in that case the ceremony was connected with ordination.

next to apply to the servants of God, so that bearing them, they might make progress in saving knowledge; might receive from them the remission of sins, and the sacrament of the Holy Supper, and might hence obtain the necessary helps for preserving and confirming their faith in Jesus Christ.”¹

SECTION VII.

Why Imposition of Hands was continued in the Church.

WE may here ask, in passing, why imposition of hands should be employed during the apostolic age, and by apostolic men, and yet not remain as a permanent rite in the church; and how, also, a rite thus peculiar, should come to be so generally and so commonly adopted? And

¹ “Paul, from this point of view, designated the whole of the solemn proceeding, without separating it into its various elements, by that which was its external symbol, as in Scripture phraseology, a single act of a transaction consisting of several parts, and sometimes that which was most striking to the senses, is often mentioned for the whole.” Neander Apost. Kirch. i. 213.

to these questions an easy answer may be given, since the same reasons which made it necessary that there should be miracles, and tongues, and supernatural gifts, and inspired men, and prophets, and visible inflictions of divine wrath, and miraculous healing of diseases, made it also wise that there should be some outward signs and symbols by which these high and peculiar prerogatives of the apostles and others gifted by them, should be accompanied, in order to justify them in the sight of others ; to bear witness to their authority ; to silence clamor and opposition ; and to give an outward sign of confirmation and assurance to the recipients of such gifts themselves. This was the true nature of the anointing of the sick, and of the laying on of hands, in connexion with miraculous healing and miraculous gifts. The descent and operation of the Holy Ghost, in his ordinary saving influences, was then, as now, unseen and unfelt, except by the recipient, and therefore the object of faith only. Some assurance was therefore requisite in order to prove that these effects, though impalpable, were real. And this consisted in miraculous gifts and powers, manifested in the one case by prayer and imposition of

hands, and in the other by prayer and anointing of the body. This subject has been very candidly stated by Dr. Hinds, an eminent Episcopalian writer of Queen's College, Oxford, and at present chaplain of Archbishop Whately. In his *History of the Rise and Progress of Christianity*, which deserves to be more generally known, after having explained why the church continued to claim the power of working miracles he says:¹ "But not only miracles ceased, because designed solely for the establishment of the church; but the obligation to perpetuate those customs which were connected with miraculous agency ceased also together with it. As instances of these, may be noticed the practice of anointing the sick, and that of laying on of hands by the apostles, subsequent to baptism.

"The first of these customs, evidently, was established as a form of miraculous cure, similar to that wrought by the pool of Bethesda. It was, no doubt, the mode in which the apostles fulfil-

¹ Vol. ii. pp. 76-79. See also Lord Barrington's *Wks.*, vol. i. p. 133. The same view is presented by Burnet in his *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 352., Page's ed. Lond. 1837.

led the Lord's special injunction to 'heal the sick.' When, therefore, such cures ceased, the cessation itself was equivalent to a formal annulment of the practice by God. Nevertheless, as nothing could have been more mortifying to the spiritual pride of a Christian, than the loss of so splendid an appendage to the church as miraculous power, (agreeably to the remarks above made,) the designing, the superstitious, and, perhaps the truly pious themselves, would naturally be slow to admit the evidence that its virtue had ceased. To the dying man and to his distressed friends, even the faintest possibility of success would be a sufficient motive for the experiment. Thus it would be continued, by some from a hope that its efficacy might be renewed; by others from reverence for a custom, which, although ineffectual, had once been blessed by the Spirit; by others, finally, it would be persisted in from a view, created by enthusiasm or fraud, that where no palpable miracle was wrought, a secret miraculous influence must be communicated in lieu of the specific benefit attached to it. Hence, in later ages, its invariable use in a great part of the Christian world as a means of grace to the departing Christian.—

Had the custom, when its miraculous use ceased, been in its nature at all applicable to edification, the reverence which retained it for such a purpose, in preference to the introduction of any new ceremony, would have been even praiseworthy. As it is, its preservation in the Greek and Roman churches is a curious monument of human weakness."

"The origin and meaning of confirmation is similar. The apostles used to lay their hands on those who had been baptized, in order that they may receive some spiritual gift,—that is, some miraculous sign that the unseen descent of the Holy Ghost on them at baptism was real.—None but an apostle could do this, and it was done, sometimes immediately on baptism, sometimes after a long interval; but all Christians seem to have claimed it as a privilege, whenever they had opportunity of receiving it. The rite was called *confirmation*, and the gift, the sign of confirming. (This much is gratuitous and without any proof.)

"Properly, then, confirmation was a temporary usage, connected with a miraculous display, and indeed, appended to the apostolical office, together with which it ceased. Like the unction

of the sick, however, it was still kept up by those who succeeded the apostles in the government of the churches, from a respect for a rite with which such important results had been so long associated."

And thus we find that the ceremony of laying on of hands was applied by the *advancing* church for numerous other purposes, on the principle still adopted by many *enlightened* men that if a little medicine is useful, the efficacy must be increased by the quantity; and therefore that if imposition of hands was useful in one case, it might be made equally serviceable in others and thus still further contribute to the glorification of the prelacy. Of these applications of the form, Spanheim¹ enumerates seven kinds. He shows that this *χρησμός*, *laying on of hands*, was administered to persons lately baptized; to new converts, who had not yet approached the sacred font; to the sick; to penitents; to heretics who returned to the Christian church; to newly married persons when the priests gave them the benediction; and to those about to be ordained to the ecclesiastical office. B. Von Sanden, enumerates other occasions, of

¹ *Biblical Repertory*, 1827, p. 61—Walck's *Treatise*.

the use of this ceremony, and says, that the *επιστάσις* was used as a sign of silence, or of a feigned cause; it was used also in contracting matrimony; in the solemn administration of an oath; in sacrifices; in condemning criminals to death; in the case of persons lately baptized; in conferring benedictions upon others; in healing the sick, and recalling the dead to life; and in ordaining priests.¹ And for every one of these applications of the form there is as much foundation as for its use in confirmation.

SECTION. VIII.

Confirmation not found in any of the primitive or Oriental Churches.—When introduced.

WE might now close the argument; but we can greatly strengthen our conclusions by an appeal to the history of this rite of confirmation. This ceremony, as we have seen, was preserved in the church, through pride and vanity; and continued for many hundred years to be considered “IN NO OTHER LIGHT than as an appendage to

¹ Consult also Jo. Caspar. Suter, and C. Du Fresne.

baptism; and during this period, that is, TILL THE NINTH CENTURY, or about the close of the eighth century, even the communion was administered to children of the tenderest age."¹ This

¹ Such is the statement made in the Pictorial edition of the Book of Common Prayer, Eng. ed. Lond., Knight & Co., p. 428. Of this astounding fact, see proofs in Riddle's Chr. Antiq., p. 536, and every ecclesiastical historian of any character whatever. A volume could be filled with proofs. See this position abundantly confirmed by Martene De Antiq. Ecclesias Ritibus, tom. i. pp. 237, 238, 246, 247. Palmer's Antiq. of the English Ritual, vol. ii. p. 198.

In the recent examination of the General Theol. Seminary in New-York, says the Episcopal Protestant, Dr. Ogilby, the Professor of Ecclesiastical History, does not seem sufficiently explicit upon several matters involved in the inquiry. He says, "On one occasion I remember having been asked (by a student) whether I *condemned* the practice of infant communion. I replied, that I would condemn those who should practise it *now*; but I declined sitting in judgment upon those Churches, which from the third century to the twelfth, saw fit to observe it. Whether they were right or wrong, I had no right to justify or condemn them."

In one of the supplemental questions addressed to Dr. Ogilby, Bishop McIlvaine inquires, in reference to the above:

"As you have said in your fortieth answer that you

is the custom in the Greek Church till the present day, in which anointing, with imposition of hands is administered immediately after baptism

have said in your teaching, that you 'would condemn those who should practise *Infant Communion now*,' but 'declined sitting in judgment upon those Churches which from the third century to the twelfth, saw fit to observe it,' and that 'whether they were right or wrong you had no right to justify or condemn them;' be so good as to state on what grounds you would in your teachings condemn those who should practise infant communion *now*, which would be inapplicable to the case of such Churches as saw fit from the third to the twelfth century to observe it." To this question, and another having reference to the same point, the Professor replies:

"These questions are sufficiently answered, I trust, when I say that the question of Infant Communion has never been ruled by the whole Church. I wholly decline judging other Churches; to their own Master they stand or fall. N. B. These questions also, I answer under protest, as to their propriety."

"Now we know not how it strikes others, but to us it appears passing strange, that a teacher of Ecclesiastical History should question the propriety of his being asked what he was in the habit of saying respecting the practice of Infant Communion as it prevailed in some Churches; and how such a Professor, in a Protestant Church, could hesitate to pronounce such a practice absurd and unscriptural, it is difficult to conceive."

and before the ceremony is closed.¹ This ceremony, however, they do not call confirmation, nor regard as a sacrament, and it is constantly administered by a presbyter.²

No trace of the ordinance of confirmation can be discovered any where, or in any church, in any part of the world, before the third century, when the use of ointment, and no more, is mentioned by Tertullian and Origen, and in the Apostolical Constitutions, and by Cyril;³ and it depends for much of its support upon forged writings or corruptions of genuine writings of the Fathers.⁴ Even then, however, and among the Latin writers, this anointing was not called confirmation. Cyprian, as late as A. D. 248, calls it *consummation*, that is, the completion of baptism.⁵ The

¹ Ricaut on the Greek Church, Lond. 1679, ch. v. and vi. p. 177; and Hey's Lectures, vol. ii. p. 461.

² See the names given to it in Hey's Lectures, ii. 461, 462; and Cave and Bingham. They justify their ministration by presbyters, from the Apostolic Constitutions. See Riddle's Christian Antiq. p. 539.

³ See Riddle's Christian Antiq. p. 541, and the various authorities there referred to.

⁴ See James' Corruptions of Scrip. Councils and the Fathers by Romanists, pp. 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 37.

⁵ Cave's Disser. under *μύρον*; and Hey's Lect. ii. 461.

Romish church, in the application of that infallible logic for which it is so notorious, asserts that Christ is the author of this rite, and *proves* the assertion by the authority of Fabian who lived about A. D. 236!¹ In this way they might *as logically* prove that Christ instituted popery, and thus shew *clearly* that darkness is light, intolerance charity, ignorance knowledge, and constant mutability infallibility.

Some of the Schoolmen, the very body-guard of the Papacy, deny that confirmation is a sacrament, or that it was instituted by Christ at all.² It was not separated from baptism TILL AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY, NOR DECLARED TO BE A SACRAMENT TILL THE TIME OF THE COUNCIL MELDENSE,³ THAT

¹ See Catechism of the Council of Trent, p. 184, part ii. § 5; and Hey's Lect. ii. 462.

² Alensis and Holcot, among the number. See also Gregor. Valent. de numer. Sacram. c. 3. Cassand. consult art. 13. Willet's Sym. Papismi, p. 813. Such also was the opinion of the renowned Alexander Alensis (or Hales), called the irrefragable doctor, Forbes ix., iv. 4. Hey's Lect. ii. 461, and of Spalutensis. See Baxter on Episcop. p. 76.

³ Riddle's Christian Antiq. p. 539.

is, IN A. D. 845, OR A. D. 1201.¹ Indeed, the permanent separation of confirmation from baptism cannot be assigned to an earlier date than the thirteenth century.² THE MATTER AND FORM of the ordinance were enjoined by Pope Eugenius IV., in the Council of Florence, IN THE YEAR 1438.³ Neither to this day has any fixed time been determined for the administration of this "fundamental rite,"⁴ the Romanists prescribing the period when children come

¹ Cave and Bingham, and Hey's Lectures, ii. 461. "The English Jesuits (says Geddes in his History of the Church of Malabar, p. 210), who could not endure that the Pope should put a bishop over them here in England, in their books wherein they labored to prove that there was no need of one, spoke very slightly of confirmation; affirming it to be a sacrament that was not enjoined but only where it might be had *very easily*; that the effects thereof might be abundantly supplied by the other sacraments, nay by ordinary assistances; that the chrism in baptism had not only the signification, but all the effects of confirmation, so far at least as to make it not to be very necessary. In a word, that confirmation was not simply necessary, neither *necessitate medii*, nor *necessitate præcepti*."

² Riddle's Antiq. p. 536.

³ Hey's Lectures, p. 536.

⁴ Hey's Lectures, p. 462.

to "the use of reason," which they suppose may be the case for all the purposes they require it, at the age of seven or twelve years;¹ though the rite "may indeed be administered to all," at whatever age. And why should not this be the case? since it requires neither faith nor knowledge on the part of its recipients—this most charitable of all churches when she has the truth of God and not the good of man to dispose of, having decreed "that unless there be some hinderance on his part who received it, it (the ceremony itself) gives new grace."² And the Anglican church, scarcely less merciful than her gracious mother, requires that "as soon as children can say in their mother tongue the article of faith, &c., then *shall* they be brought to the bishop * * * that every child may have a witness of his confirmation."³

Nor is this all; for not only is it true that we are anathematized and cut off from the Catholic church for not believing in an ordinance for

¹ Catechism of the Council of Trent, p. 189.

² Catechism of the Council of Trent, p. 190.

³ See *Liturgiæ Britannicæ*, Lond. 1842, p. 284, 285, where the additions of 1549, 1552, 1559, 1604, and 1662, once all given, and *Liturgies of King Edward VI.*, by Parker Society, p. 120, and p. 295. Cambridge 1844.

which there can be shown to have existed no fixed name, no fixed time of celebration, no real or separate existence for centuries after Christ, and no institution by Christ or his Apostles; but for rejecting an ordinance which the most ancient, the most pure, the most wonderful, and the most miraculously preserved of all the churches that have ever existed, did not believe, and which they did not practise.

That this was the case with the primitive churches in Britain, Scotland, and Ireland, even an archbishop testifies. For Usher tells us¹ "that the Irish did baptize their infants without any consecrated chrism, Lanfranc maketh complaint in his letters to Terduluacus (or Tirlagh), the chief king of that country. And Bernard reporteth, that Malachias in his time (which was after the days of Lanfranc and Pope Hildebrand) did of the new institute the most wholesome use of confession, the sacrament of confirmation, and the contract of marriages, all which he saith the Irish before were either ignorant of, or did neglect."²

¹ Of the religion professed by the ancient Irish, ch. v. p. 34. Lond. 1687, and see p. 24.

² The words of Lanfranc are: "*Quod infantes baptismis,*

Bernard also, "in his Life of Malachi,¹ who went to Armagh in the twelfth century, speaks of the Christian people there as most barbarous and savage, for their rejection of auricular confession, authoritative absolution, the sacrament of confirmation, and other Papal inventions." And as Archbishop Ussher, and many considerations which I have elsewhere adduced, make it manifest that they received the gospel with its ordinances and forms from the Gallic and eastern nations, we must therefore conclude that *they* also, until corrupted and subjugated by the Romish despotism, rejected this rite, and with it, the whole orders and other vain and impious ceremonies of the hierarchy.²

sine chrismate consecrato baptizentur." Epist. ad Tordalachum Nazaren Lett. ii. p. 22, in Jameson's Culdees, p. 206.

¹ See Irving's Conf. of the Ch. of Scotland, Hist. Acct. p. 36. His words are: "Usus saluberrimum Confessionis, sacramentum confirmationis, etc., quæ omnia aut ignorabant aut negligebant Malachias de novo instituit." In Vit. Malachi cap. ii. in Opera Tom. iv. p. 2222, etc.

Bede confirms this, as he only mentions the two sacraments as used by them; see in do. p. 56, and Eccl. Hist. The same thing is affirmed against Boniface by Clement and Samson in the ninth century, in do. p. 59.

² See the author's work on Presbytery and Prelacy, Book III. ch. i. § 2, 3, 4, and ch. ii. § 1, 2.

SECTION IX.

Other Testimonies against Confirmation.

THE Waldenses, with all their affiliated branches, the Paulicians, the Albigenses, the Hussites, the Poor Men of Lyons, the Bohemians, the Lollards, and the Wickliffites, rejected the sacrament and divine authority of confirmation.¹ In a confession drawn up in 1120 by the Waldenses and Albigenses, in Art. XIII. they say, "We do not acknowledge any other sacrament but baptism and the Lord's supper."² And in another article drawn up in 1120, as Leger maintains, they say:³ "Now to speak of the

¹ See Blair's History of the Waldenses, vol. i. pp. 174, 175, 239, 240, and Perrin's History of the Waldenses and of the Waldenses called Albigenses, London, 1624.

² See in *ibid.* vol. i. p. 505, and Perrins' History of the Waldenses, Lond. 1624, p. 60.

³ See *do.* vol. i. p. 522, and Perrin's History of, Part iii. p. 101. See also on Wickliffe and the others, Vaughan's Life of, vol. ii. p. 308, and my work as above.

It is true that recently they have been induced, through the efforts of their very liberal and devoted friends, Dr.

chrism, which they at present call the sacrament of confirmation, having no ground at all in the Scripture to this purpose; that first, it must be consecrated by a bishop, and compounded of olive oil and of balm, to be applied to the person baptized, upon the forehead, with the sign of the cross, and with these words:—
'I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee by the sign of salvation, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;' which is performed by imposing of hands, and with a white attire fastened on the

Gilly and Col. Beckwith, to adopt a modified form of Liturgy, similar to that adopted in some of the French churches. But even so, their order for confirmation has no essential resemblance to that of the Episcopal church, as the service is conducted by each pastor and does not include imposition of hands. Their present discipline provides that "The church does not permit the pastor to admit to confirmation of the vow of baptism any but only persons well-instructed in the truths of Christianity, and ready to give a reason for their faith, at least upon fundamental points."

"The Catechumens whose conduct has been irregular in any respects, are not admitted to ratify their vow of baptism till after they have given proofs of amendment." Discipline of the Vaudois Church, now in the possession of Rev. Dr. Cheever.

head. This is what is called the sacrament of confirmation, which we find not instituted by either Christ or his apostles; for Christ, the pattern of all his church, was not confirmed in his person, and doth not require that there should be any such unction in baptism, but only pure water; and therefore such a sacrament is not found needful to salvation, whereby God is blasphemed, and which was introduced by the devil's instigation, to seduce the people, and to deprive them of the faith of the church, and that by such means they might be drawn the more to believe the ceremonies, and the necessity of the bishops."

The churches of Constantinople, of Armenia, of Antioch, and of Jerusalem, while they desire prayer to be made for the Holy Ghost, do not seem directly to notice the imposition of hands.¹

The entire Greek church, as we have seen, continues to reject this ordinance to the present day. So do the Russians, using this proof, that as there is but one baptism, so there can be but one unction.² According to Tago Labo, their

¹ See Palmer's *Antiquities of the English Ritual*, vol. ii. p. 201, and the learned authorities there referred to.

² See authorities in Willet's *Syn. Pap.* p. 813. See

bishop, the Ethiopian church hold the same opinion.¹ Assemani is compelled to adduce the most irrefragable proof that the Oriental churches, the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, and Nestorians, had no sacrament or ordinance of confirmation.² The same is true of the Armenian church.³ Neither is this rite practised among the Mingrelians of Colchis.⁴ The Jesuits, Alphonse Mendez, Patriarch of Ethiopia, Emanuel

also Pinkerton's *Present State of the Greek Church in Russia*, p. 178.

¹ See authorities in preceding note.

² See these given from the original Oriental authorities in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis Romæ*, Tom. ii. Index, Tom. i. 532, Tom. iii. 608, and Tom. iv. 271, et seq. See also Palmer's *Antiq. of English Ritual*, ii. 201. Grant's *Nestorians*, and Perkins' *Residence among the Nestorians*. *Missionary Researches in Armenia*, by Smith and Dwight, p. 381, English edit.

³ See Ricaut on the State of the Armenian Church, ch. viii. p. 431, etc. Lond. 1679, and *Missionary Researches*, by Smith and Dwight, p. 306, English edit.

They have a form connected with baptism of anointing, but no more, and it is performed by a presbyter. See also *Histoire d'Ethiope*, Tom. ii. Pt. 2. p. 440. Hough's *Christianity in India*, ii. 47.

⁴ See in preceding note do. p. 156.

Almeyda, and Baltazar Tuller, testify the same of the Abyssinian church.¹

And to crown this pyramid of towering proofs, and complete this chain of overwhelming testimony, which extends from the very age of the apostles to the present hour, and from pole to pole, till it encircles the entire globe; the rite of ~~circumcision~~ was unknown among the Syrian Christians of Malabar, who are supposed by Episcopalians themselves to have existed there from the time of the second century, until they were discovered by Europeans in the year 1501.² Of this the proof is positive and undeniable, since, in the fourth session of the Synod of Diampar, where they were constrained to submit themselves to the Romish See, under Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, it was resolved,³ that “forasmuch as hitherto there has been no use, nor

¹ Histoire d’Ethiope, Livre i. ch. 37. p. 91. Hough’s History of Christianity, ii. 47.

² See Geddes’ History of the Church of Malabar, Lond. 1694.

³ Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diampar in Hough’s History of Christianity in India, vol. ii. pp. 573, 574. See also the History of the Church of Malabar, together with the Synod of Diampar, by Michael Geddes, Lond. 1694, p. 213, 214.

SO MUCH AS KNOWLEDGE of the holy sacrament of confirmation among the Christians of this bishopric, the heretical prelates that govern it, having neglected to feed the people *in a great many cases* with wholesome Catholic food; therefore, the Synod doth, declare," &c. And in the second decree, the Synod "to its great sorrow, having been informed, that some ignorant persons in sacred matters and the doctrine of the holy sacraments of the church, being instigated by the devil to persist in their cursed schism, did in several places resist the most illustrious Metropolitan in his former visitation of these churches, so far as not only *to refuse to receive the holy sacrament of confirmation* from him, but did also oppose him publicly in the churches, and that many did absent themselves by pretending that it was an unnecessary thing, AND THAT THEY HAD NEVER SEEN NOR HEARD OF IT BEFORE, and others that they should be affronted by the holy ceremony of the prelates touching their cheek, scurrilously upbraiding those that had received it, with base provoking words, telling them that they had suffered themselves to be affronted and buffeted, with other such sacrilegious expres-

sions, full of infidelity and heresy, arising from the schism wherein they have been brought up : *whole towns conspiring together so far in this mutiny, that the despising or receiving this holy sacrament, became the test of their obedience or disobedience* to the said Metropolitan, doth therefore," &c. And were any proof necessary beyond these quotations, the Portuguese historian Gonevea, frequently makes the same avowal.¹

The Lutheran church, it is true, has an order of confirmation, but it is merely "for the renewal of their baptismal vows, by such as were baptized in infancy and have come to years of discretion," and is conducted wholly by the minister of each congregation, who imposes hands and gives his right hand to each of the catechumens.² On this subject Dr. Schmucker

¹ Hough's History of Christianity in India, vol. ii. pp. 47-52, where the shameless attempts made to meet this testimony are exposed. The question is set at rest by the following valuable note drawn up by Professor Lee, and given in his History of the Syrian Church in India. See note B at the end.

² Hymns and Liturgy for the use of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches, p. 38.

remarks:¹ "The imposition of hands, although generally practised, is not regarded by us as an essential part of this public ceremony, nor do we attribute to the whole ordinance any other than a moral influence." "It is this public profession of religion and the blessing of God pronounced on the subject, to which specifically the name of confirmation is now given; because the catechumen literally confirms the vows made for him in his infancy. Confirmation among us may therefore be defined, a solemn mode of admitting to sacramental communion, those who were baptized in their infancy. *What we regard as essential in it*, is practised by ALL Christian denominations, which require a profession of religion before admission to sacramental communion."

Similar is the order for confirmation in use in the French Reformed churches, except that it is less formal, and has neither imposition nor giving of hands.²

¹ Popular Theology, p, 236. This work was prepared at the request of the Lutheran Synod.

² See the Liturgy of the French Protestant Church, translation. Published at Neufchatel. Charleston, 1836, pp. 72, 73.

Ravanel, whose work had the approbation of the French Reformed church, says:¹ "The wrangling Popish divines maintain the dignity and efficacy of *confirmation* ABOVE the sacrament of BAPTISM itself; for they assert that it is not lawful for any one but a bishop to confer it, whilst they concede that *presbyters* can administer baptism: and they impiously teach that *confirmation* is a *certain perfecting* and *consuming* of *baptism*, as if those were to be counted only *half Christians* who are baptized only, and not confirmed; whereas, the apostle testifies that we put on Christ in baptism."

Wickliffe was equally, and very similarly, bold in his opinion:² "It does not appear that this sacrament should be *reserved* to a Cæsarean *prelacy*; that it would be more devout and more conformable to Scripture language, to *deny* that the *Bishops give the Holy Spirit*, or confirm the giving of it; and that it therefore seems to some, that the brief and trivial confirmation of the PRELATES, and the ceremonies added to it for the sake of pomp, were introduced AT THE SUG-

¹ Bibliotheca Sacra, sub voce, in Powell on the Apostolic Succession, p. 188, 2d edit. English.

² Vaughan's Life, vol. ii. p. 306.

GESTION OF SATAN, that the people may be deceived as to the faith' of the church, and that the state and NECESSITY OF BISHOPS may be more acknowledged."

Melancthon, on behalf of the Lutheran churches observes :¹ "The rite of confirmation, as retained by Bishops, IS ALTOGETHER AN IDLE CEREMONY: but an examination of youth, in order to a profession of their faith, with public *prayer* for the *pious* part of them, would be useful, and the *prayer* would not be in vain."

Bishop Wilson has declared that the prelatical doctrine of confirmation rests "upon the consent of all the world, which is instead of a command ;"² and Wheatley with equal confidence affirms,³ that the history of the church, by testifying the continuance of it in all times and places, after these gifts of the Spirit ceased, shows that it has ever been received and used as a perpetual and standing ordinance of Christianity. I think I need not produce my author-

¹ Loci Communes de Confirmatione, Opera, tom. i. pp. 95 and 138. Wittemberg A. D. 1580.

² Sacra Privata, p. 98, Oxford edit.

³ Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer, p. 388, Oxford, 1819.

ities for this; because, I believe, no one doubts of the universality of the practice."

Now of the utter recklessness with which these positive and unqualified averments are made, I have offered proof from the writings of Romanists and prelatists themselves. Bishop Burnet too does not hesitate "to declare, that after all this, here is no sacrament, no express institution, neither by Christ nor his apostles; no rule given to practise it, and, which is the most essential, THERE IS NO MATTER HERE; for the laying on of hands is only a gesture in prayer; nor are there any federal rites declared to belong to it; it being indeed rather a ratifying and confirming the baptism, than any new stipulation."

And that the early English reformers were of the same mind, may be judged of by the answers returned to the King's interrogatories by Cranmer and all those who favored his opinion in opposition to Stokesley's paper. To the question,¹ "Whether confirmation be instituted by

¹ On the Thirty-nine Articles, p. 353.

² See these in Burnet's History of the Reformation, Nares's edit., vol. iv. p. 173. See also Cranmer's Works,

Christ? responses: There is no place in Scripture that declareth this sacrament to be instituted of Christ."

"First, for the places alleged for the same be no institutions, but acts and deeds of the apostles. Secondly, these acts were done by a special gift given to the apostles for the confirmation of God's Word at that time. Thirdly, the said special gift doth not now remain with the successors of the apostles."

"What is the external sign?"

"The church useth *Chrisma* for the exterior sign, but the Scripture maketh no mention thereof."

"What is the efficacy of this sacrament?"

"The Bishop in the name of the church doth invoke the Holy Ghost to give strength and constancy, with other spiritual gifts, unto the person confirmed: so that the efficacy of this sacrament is of such value as is the prayer of the bishop made in the name of the church."

It is a further confirmation of the views of these early reformers, that in the "Short Catechism of Plain Instruction containing the sum

by Jenkyns, Oxford, 1833, vol. ii. pp. 18 and 101, where he is equally strong.

of Christian learning set forth by the King's Majesty's authority for all schoolmasters to teach, A. D. 1553," the whole subject of confirmation is as entirely passed by as it is in the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly, and yet this is a work of fifty-five large octavo pages, and contains a full exposition of baptism, the Lord's supper, and every necessary truth.¹

And that these views continued to prevail in the English church, even after the ordinance had been firmly established by Elizabeth, will appear from a letter written to his clergy by Archbishop Whitgift, in the year 1591, in which he complains:² "I am very sorry to hear that my brethren, the bishops of my province of Canterbury, do *so generally* begin to neglect to confirm children, at least to call for, and exact the use both of it and of catechising children in the church by the minister, and of parents to send their children, and to come thither themselves. These wants are now grown *so common* and offensive, by the

¹ See printed both in English and Latin, in the Liturgies and Primer of Edward VI., by the Parker Society, p. 485.

² See given in Cardwell's Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England, vol. ii. p. 23

ill effects which they are found to yield, that I am in conscience urged very earnestly, and in the fear of God, to require your lordship and others my brethren the bishops, according to your pastoral care, and for the duty which you owe to God and his church, both in your own visitations from time to time, and by your archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical officers, to give strict charge unto parents to come themselves, or at least to send their children to the church at such times, and especially unto ministers to expound unto them, and to examine the children in *that little catechism*, which is allowed by authority; and also at the baptizing of infants to give that charge for bringing them unto the bishop to be confirmed, which by the Book of Common Prayer is prescribed."

SECTION X.

Presbyters as well as prelates were formerly allowed to confirm; with concluding remarks on the historical testimony.

BUT there is another assertion to which prelati- cal, not to say Romish, writers willingly

commit themselves, and that is, as Jeremy Taylor delivers it, that "bishops were ALWAYS and the ONLY ministers of confirmation."¹ Now this position is just as remote from the truth in the case as the other. It is not the fact that prelatial bishops have been always, or alone, the ministers in confirmation. On this point Bishop Burnet uses strong language: "The INVENTION," he says,² "that was afterwards found out, by which the bishop was held to be the only minister of confirmation, even though presbyters were suffered to confirm, WAS A PIECE OF SUPERSTITION, WITHOUT ANY COLOUR FROM SCRIPTURE. It was settled, (that is, by this invented, superstitious law,) that the bishop only might consecrate the chrism; and though he was the ordinary minister of confirmation, yet presbyters were also suffered to do it, the chrism being consecrated by the bishop."

Jerome avers that even in his day "there was nothing which a bishop can do, which a presbyter cannot do—except ordination."³ Martene,

¹ This is the general position which is constantly assumed.

² On the Thirty-nine Articles, p. 354.

³ Ep. ad Evagr. 85.

who quotes this, allows that it has been the custom of the Greek church in all ages to confirm (*per simplices sacerdotes*) by presbyters merely, and that it was one objection urged by them against the Latin church that it did not permit presbyters to confirm. He admits further that this practice was common to other churches also, as in Egypt, according to the testimony of Ambrosiaster. This practice was sanctioned by Rabanus; was common in Spain, as appears by the decree of its council; was also common in France, as appears by the decisions of two different councils; and was expressly sanctioned by Pope Gregory, who finding that his attempt to prohibit the presbyters of Sardinia from confirming, was resisted by the churches, altered his infallible decree and continued to them the indefinite exercise of their previous liberty. All this is admitted by this highest Romish authority.¹ And it is further manifest that the above assertion is contradicted by all the evidence adduced to prove that all the Ori-

¹ De Antiquis Ecclesie Ritibus, Antwerp, 1736, 4 vols. fol. tom. i. pp. 246, 247. See also Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles, pp. 354, and Riddle's Christian Antiquities, p. 538. See also Binii Concilia in locis.

ental churches rejected the rite, and that the Syrian church, the Waldenses, the ancient British and Irish churches, never had any ministers higher than presbyters.

What, then, are we to think of writers and preachers, living or dead, in Charleston, or at Oxford, who, EITHER IGNORANTLY OR ARROGANTLY, authenticate such statements as the ones upon which I have been commenting, and which are necessarily involved in the very theory of confirmation as a means of communicating prelatival and saving grace? If, through *ignorance*, they can solemnly announce such things as facts, do they not proclaim themselves fit successors of the worthies of the dark ages; and if they can repeat them through *pride* and a desire to sustain the dignity of their office and the supremacy of *their* church, are they not doing evil for a fancied good, perpetuating fraud for the sake of favor, and blinding their own minds and the consciences of others, for the unworthy purpose of securing their own party and sectarian distinctions? It is, indeed, amazing with what effrontery such men can gather around them the cloak of self-righteous pharisaism, as they coolly say to other Christian churches

around them, "Be ye excommunicate and expunged from the list of Christian churches, for we are holier than ye, and alone possess the promise and the grace of Christ and the privileges of his kingdom." But it is still more amazing how sensible, intelligent and candid men can listen to such exhibitions of ignorant bravado and intolerant bigotry, and not rise up against them in open and manly condemnation. But our wonder, however great, must give place to the fact, however mortifying; and seek in something else than the truth and purity and charity of such a system, for those elements which commend it, in spite of all contrary evidence, to the predilections and unthinking prejudices of many.

Let it, however, be borne in mind, that in this doctrine of confirmation we have a fair type and specimen of prelacy; and in the arguments by which it is sustained, a fair sample of the grounds on which ALL that is PECULIAR to the hierarchy, and claimed by it as *par excellence* its own, is upheld. And just as assuredly as the torch light of investigation reveals the sand on which is built the fabric of confirmation, does it also disclose "the hay, wood, and stubble,"

which have been erected on that same foundation, in the orders, rites, and pomps of garments and of garniture, and which all perish and are utterly consumed when tried by the fire of a searching investigation.

SECTION XI.

Confirmation injurious to the character of God, and of his true Ministers.

I WILL now close this discussion with some reflections. For I would have my readers to understand why it is necessary to spend time in examining and discussing this subject. In itself considered, confirmation is a small matter; but as one of those marks by which Romanists and prelatists distinguish between a true and a false church, between THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, which is the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation, and those conventicles of Samaritans, which can hope for salvation only through uncovenanted mercy, it becomes of essential importance. It is one of the buttresses by which

this citadel of error is sustained, and one of the chief means by which it blinds and deludes the souls of thoughtless and unwary men. It is, therefore, in every way, and to a *fatal extent*, injurious, and to be openly reprobated.

IT IS INJURIOUS TO THE CHARACTER OF GOD ; to God the Father, whose wisdom, love, and sovereign mercy it would tie down to a mere outward and unmeaning ceremony, and to the ministry of men, of whom we have lamentable experience that they constitute **VERY FILTHY CHANNELS** for the exclusive communication of divine mercy ; to God the Son, who is the only head, legislator, and efficient source of grace and salvation to his people, and who alone can institute and ordain ordinances for their edification ; and to God the Holy Spirit, whose prerogative it is to move upon the hearts of men, even as the wind bloweth where it listeth, unfettered and unbound ; who cannot, therefore, be tied down to any rites, or ceremonies, times, or places, walls, or persons, and to suppose whom subjected to lawn sleeves, carnal manipulations, holy water, greasy oil, and all the mummeries and dumb signs of paganized Chris-

tianity,' is little short of blasphemy against his nature, and an utter denial of his personality and absolute Godhead.

¹ See Pagano Papismus, or, An Exact Parallel between Rome Pagan and Rome Christian, in their Doctrines and Ceremonies, by Joshua Stopford, B. D. 1765. Lond. rep. 1844. He quotes the following confessions at p. 3, and numerous others may be seen in Mussard's Conformity between Modern and Ancient Ceremonies, Leyden, 1687, Lond. 1745, see ch. i.

"When I call to mind the institutions of the holy mysteries of ethnicks," says Beroaldus, "I am even forced to believe, that most things appertaining to the celebration of our solemnities and ceremonies are taken thence. As for example: from the Gentile religion are the shaven heads of priests, turnings round at the altar, sacrificial pomp, and many such like ceremonies which our priests solemnly use in our mysteries. How many things (good God!) in our religion are like to the Pagan religion? How many rites common?"—Apud Wolfium Lection. Memor. tom. i. p. 907.

Baronius confesseth, "That in many things there is a conformity between popery and paganism; that many things have been laudably translated from Gentile superstition into the Christian religion, hath been demonstrated by many examples, and the authority of Fathers. And what wonder if the most holy bishops have granted that the ancient customs of Gentiles should be introduced into the worship of the true God, from which it seemed impos-

CONFIRMATION IS INJURIOUS TO THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S TRUE AND ONLY MINISTERS, and an utter contradiction to that simplicity, meekness, and lowliness, which are characteristic of Christianity. In direct opposition to Christ's warnings, it makes essential to the church those who "lord it over his heritage;"¹

sible to take off many, though converted to Christianity." —*Annal. tom. i. ad annum 58, p. 606.* And he comes to particulars, *ad annum 44, p. 382*: "Anniversary vigils thou hast in Suetonius de Vespaniano, cap. vii.; holy water and sprinkling of sepulchres, in Juvenal Sat. 6, and others. Lights, in Suetonius de Octavio." Candles and torches, in Seneca and Macrobius. Polydor Virgil having in several chapters described the ancient usages and superstitious ceremonies of the pagan religion, concludes that book with these words: "And such was the beginning of sacred rites and ceremonies among the Romans, a good part of which have we embraced," etc., *de inventor. rerum, lib. iv.* "The pomp of rites and ceremonies," saith Cornelius Agrippa, "in vestments, vessels, lights, bells, organs, music, odors, sacrifices, gestures, rich pictures, choice of meats, fastings," etc., are not the least part of religion. And then, a little after, he adds, a great part of which, as Eusebius testifieth, hath been taken from ethnicks, and received into our religion.—*De Vanitate Scient. cap. lvi.*

¹ Hence even in this country we have now the titles of "The Lord Bishop," "His Grace," with armorial seals, and this even in the Protestant Episcopal church.

who "exercise lordship and authority over his ministers;" who are "called Rabbi, and Father, (right reverend father), and Master;" and transform themselves into the apostles of Christ, saying that they are apostles when they are not;"¹ and has given to these dominion over the faith, and even over the salvation of men. And, whereas, Christ told his ministers that "all ye are brethren,"² without distinction in order or in rank, and has solemnly declared that the Holy Ghost has made presbyters "the bishops of the flock,"³ this ordinance makes essential to its administration and to the reception of that measure of grace which is requisite for salvation, the administration of an order *called bishops*, who are described as superior to *Christ's bishops*, and to whom their name has been impiously attributed, and makes the true bishops of Christ's appointment dependent upon these man-made bishops for their office, their authority, their rights, and their grace to discharge the duties even of "*inferior clergy*." And it can

¹ See the author's Lectures of the Apostolical Succession, Lect. vi. pp. 137-142.

² See preceding note.

³ See Acts 20: 17, 28, and 1 Peter 5. 2.

be shown that through this ambition and usurpation of prelates, and the consequent destruction of the parity of Christ's ministers, and the simplicity of Christ's ordinances, the enemy came in like a flood upon the church, and covered its fruitful plains with the mud, the seeds, and the rank weeds, of heathenish superstitions. For, with the introduction of pagan rites, came pagan doctrines; and with the preservation of popish rites in the English and American prelatic church, we have now living proof that Romish doctrines are still prevalent, and growing, and likely to become dominant over Protestant truth, which is shadowed and "sicklied over" with the rank growth, and pestilent miasma of popish rites, garments, and traditions. "Difference of clerical rank has been the very element and principle of all the pomp," pride, ceremonies, gainful errors, priestcraft, hierarchical assumptions, intolerance and persecutions of the nominal church. Had the simple purity of the ministry remained, then there would have been no pope, no cardinals, no archbishops, no prelates, no inquisitions, no established churches; no manifold orders of Franciscans, Carmelites, Dominicans, Jesuits, Knights Templar, and

Knights of St. John; no endless varieties of saints and heroes, monks and nuns, cœnobites and anchorites, and the innumerable orders, sects, schisms, crusades, wars, and murders, of the Romish hierarchy. Nor is there in the history of the church universal, a single instance of any church which lost the parity of ministers, which did not lose with it, her purity of doctrine, and her virgin simplicity of form.¹

¹ "The heathen," says Stopford in his *Pagano-Papismus*, p. 261, "had several religious orders, or confraternities, of both sexes: so much is confessed by our adversaries."—Beyerlinck *Magn. Theat. lib. v. p. 366*; Polydor Virgil, *De Inventor. lib. vii. cap. 6*. The Romans had their Vestal, Titian, or Tatian, Augustal, Antonian, Ælian, Aurelian, Faustinian, and Salian Confraternities.—Alexander ab Alex. *Genial. dier. lib. cap. 26*.

Thus our Romanists have several religious orders; as Benedictines, Carthusians, Bernardine, Prædicators, Carmelites, Johannites, Antonites, Lazarites, Slavonians, Gregorians, Ambrosians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Templars, the Servants of Mary, the Brethren of the Cross, the Soldiers of Jesu, the Bare-footed, the Poor Brethren, the Brethren of St. James, the Brethren of St. Sophia, the Brethren of St. Helen, the Order of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the Order of St. John, the Order of St. Briget, the Order of Whippers, the Order of Basil, the Order of the Sepulchrits, the Order of Wilhelmites, the Order of Wen-

SECTION XII.

Confirmation is Injurious to the Sacrament of Baptism, and to the Recipients themselves. Conclusion.

HOW INJURIOUS ALSO IS THIS ORDINANCE OF CONFIRMATION TO THE TRUE AND HEAVEN-APPOINTED SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM! Without it baptism is declared to be imperfect, and insufficient to accomplish "that whereunto God hath sent it." Man, forsooth, must supply what was lacking in this divine appointment, and complete that which God had only begun. For in whatever light we consider baptism, whether as the sign and seal of the regeneration of the soul, the forgiveness of sins, the burial and mortification of the old man, the resurrection and quickening again of the new man, and the reception of all the benefits of the covenant of grace; or

ceslaites, the Order of Purgatory, the Order of the Dark Valley, the Order of Joseph, the Order of B. Mary de Mercede, with many more, to the number of sixty-five, enumerated by Tileman Heshusius.—*Errore Pontif. loc. 25.*

Mussard, who was a Huguenot clergyman, traces the Pope and the Romish orders of clergy distinctly to the same source, see ch. ii. and iii.

whether we regard it as the actual communication of these blessings by an *opus operatum* efficacy, as Romanists and many prelatists affirm; in either case, confirmation, by being made necessary in order to supply grace sufficient for the full salvation of the recipient, assuredly vaunteth itself over God's own sacrament, so that, to use the illustration of that heroic and persecuted man, Thomas Cartwright, "as Ishmael the bastard would have displaced Isaac, the right begotten son, so this bastard ordinance of confirmation listeth itself above the lawful sacrament of baptism." Baptism, we are told, "is not perfect without it," and in the epistle ascribed to Eusebius and Melciades bishops of Rome, it is affirmed that "CONFIRMATION IS MORE TO BE REVERENCED THAN THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM;"¹ and as to Prelatical writers, without seeking out the extravagancies of the most ultra among them, it is enough to quote the sentiments of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, of whom Bishop Heber says:² "There is, indeed,

¹ See authorities of, in Cartwright's Confutation, p. 277, and Willet's Syn. Pop. p. 817, etc.

² See Works, vol. i. Life of him by Heber, and Review of his Works on Confirmation.

a *dangerous consequence* attendant on both Taylor's arguments, that, by *limiting the gift of the Holy Ghost to confirmation*, he makes BAPTISM taken by itself, OF NONE EFFECT, or at most, of no further effect, than as a decent and necessary introduction to that which would be, on this hypothesis, the main and distinctive consignation of a Christian."

Surely, therefore, when we thus perceive the true nature and tendency of this ordinance, and how, like the holy days of man's devising, which obscure and give up to profanation the holy Sabbath of God's institution, it vilifies and supersedes the holy sacrament of baptism, we may well say with King James, (who was not easily horrified with prelatical profanity,) when he heard the reasoning of his divines at the Hampton Court conference,¹ "that arguing a confirmation of baptism as if this sacrament without it were of no validity, is plainly blasphemous."²

And may I not add, that THE ORDINANCE OF CONFIRMATION IS ALSO INJURIOUS TO ITS RECI-

¹ See the account of, in *The Phoenix*, Lond. 1707, vol. i. p. 139, &c.

² See also Calvin's strong remarks, in *Institut.*, b. iv. ch. xix. pp. 538, 539, vol. ii.

PIENTS AND TO THE CAUSE OF TRUE SPIRITUAL RELIGION. "It is," as Archbishop Whately allows, "too often so mistaken and perverted as to become an empty and unmeaning form, or a dangerous snare."¹ In the case of those who consider that, in accordance with the Anglican rubric, all the qualification required for its reception is a competent knowledge of the catechism and other formularies, it is the former. Such persons regard it in the same light as the ancient youths did the forms by which their entrance upon the years of maturity was signalized (of which custom confirmation is doubtless a Christianized representation),² as a kind of ho-

¹ Charges and other Tracts, Lond. 1836, p. 93.

² The ceremonies connected with this event are thus alluded to by Adam, in his Roman Antiquities, who refers to various authorities: "The ceremony of changing the toga was performed with great solemnity before the images of the lares, to whom the bulla was consecrated, sometimes in the capitol, or they immediately went thither, or to some temple, to pay their devotions to the gods, (in a consecrated church.) Then the young man was conducted by his father or principal relation to the forum, accompanied by his friends, (whose attendance was called *OFFICIUM SOLEMNE TOGÆ VIRILIS*, the ceremony of taking up the manly robe,) and there recommended to some eminent orator, (his god-

liday display and season of festivity, gratulation, and pride; but as to any serious belief in the necessity of regeneration as a prerequisite qualification, they dream not of it. They have been taught, as Bishop Mant words it, to "believe in baptismal regeneration, and that there is no other regeneration," and they now therefore confirm their belief that there is no other, by

father,) whom he should study to imitate, whence he was said *forum attingere vel in forum venire*, when he began to attend to public business, (and go to the communion.) This was called *dies togæ virilis*, or *dies tirocinii*, and the conducting of one to the forum, *TIROCINIUM*; the young men were called *TIRONES*, young or raw soldiers, because then they first began to serve in the army.

"When all the formalities of this day were finished, the friends and dependents of the family were invited to a feast, and small presents distributed among them, called *SPORTULÆ*. The emperors on that occasion used to give a largess to the people, *CONGIARIUM*, so called from *congius*, a measure of liquids. Servius appointed, that those who assumed the *toga virilis* should send a certain coin to the Temple of Youth.

"Parents and guardians permitted young men to assume the *toga virilis*, sooner or later than the age of seventeen, as they judged proper; under the emperors, when they had completed the fourteenth year. Before this they were considered as part of the family, afterwards of the state."

becoming communicants while impenitent and unconverted, and by thus swelling the ranks of fashionable, well-bred, and well-fed Christians, who worship God on Sunday, and perhaps on some other holy days, and live the rest of their time to eat and drink and be merry.¹

OH, HOW TERRIBLE is the delusion with which this ceremony ensnares the consciences of multitudes! All that impenitent and worldly souls

¹ It would seem now-a-days, if one may judge by Charleston, that the rule is to act by contraries, for although it is now, when I write, the season of LENT, it is the very "dog-day" season of gaiety, when the wealth, and time, and thoughts, even of communicants, are *lent* to fancy-balls, the preparation of "costumes," the race-course, theatres, &c. Such persons, it is true, have, as we are informed, been publicly *advised* not to come to the ensuing communion, though they will be, I suppose, perfectly welcome to any subsequent communion. And by way of comforting their hearts under this severe *recommendation*, it has been lately enacted that in future no non-episcopal heretic, whether Presbyterian (who rank as *arch-heretics*) or any other denomination, are to be permitted to approach the consecrated altar of an Episcopal communion, destitute as they are of WATER-REGENERATION, and CONFIRMATION-GRACE. Such an excommunication will surely strike terror and dismay into the hearts of all who are exposed to the bolts of such man-created thunder.

desire is such "A FORM of godliness" as will satisfy their conscience and quell its anxieties, and yet not interfere with their enjoyment of the pleasures, the pomps and the honors, of the world. And in what possible way could this be more effectually provided, than in this very FORM of confirmation? This *form* is sanctioned by "THE CHURCH," claims inspiration and divine institution, and thus meets, as such persons imagine, all the claims of God upon their hearts. Such is the authority of confirmation, and the influence it is capable of exerting. And what is its nature? Not now to refer to the idolatries and anti-Christian absurdities which are taught in the Romish apostacy, and to confine our remarks to the prelacy, we remark that in the first place all that is required by *the rubric* as a qualification for the rite, is that the candidate "can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and can also answer to such other questions as in the short catechism are contained." And this they are to do when they have "now come to years of discretion." So that, as far as the law goes, there is not the slightest necessity that the candidate should have "knowledge to discern the

Lord's body," or that he should have experienced that spiritual and saving change which Christ declared to be necessary, even for those who had been already baptized and circumcised, and made members of his outward, true, and visible church.¹ In the second place, in the catechism which the candidates are to be able "TO SAY OR ANSWER," they are taught that by baptism "they WERE MADE members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of God." This they are taught that it is their solemn duty now and ever "TO BELIEVE." (2, 3.) And this is again fully taught them in another part of even this *short* catechism; and that the *general* teaching of the Episcopal church is to this effect, is proved by the explicit authority of Archbishop Whately, who is so moderate on many subjects. For in his explanation of confirmation, under the head of "Explanation of Words in the Service," where the Bishop, "in all the plenitude of Episcopal grace" and authority, thanks God "WHO HAST VOUCHSAFED TO REGENERATE HIS SERVANTS (i. e., all who can say the creed, &c.,) by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto

¹ See John c. iii.

them FORGIVENESS OF ALL THEIR SINS." Archbishop Whately says the term "*regenerate* means born again so as to become new creatures," and refers in proof to the passages in the catechism and to the third chapter of John.¹ And thus does this ceremony, IN THREE WAYS, lift up its voice against a fundamental doctrine of God's word, and ensnare the souls of men; pronouncing them to be new created in Christ Jesus, and having all their sins forgiven by the necessary, operation of their baptismal service; and in virtue of it, ratified and confirmed as regenerate and completely forgiven, whenever they can "SAY" the catechism and other formulas, and make the necessary promises. Surely, all the efforts of a few evangelical men cannot lift up a standard against such a flood of ungodliness as is thus poured into the church, since it is confessed that there is "an almost universal defection" among the recipients of these outward rites throughout the Anglican church.

On the other hand, to those who have been led by devout and "*too superstitious*" mothers to believe that "there is some mystical virtue

¹ See p. 16 of this separate Pamphlet.

in the rite of confirmation," though the recipient may not exactly understand its meaning,¹ it becomes "a dangerous snare." It binds their souls in the chains of superstition and slavish fear. They become the victims of priestcraft, and are led to look for grace, comfort, and salvation, to rites and forms and priestly ministrations, and not to that blood and righteousness of Christ, which are able to cleanse from all sin, and to give peace and joy and assurance to every troubled soul. Thus are they in bondage all their lives through fear, and are chained down in darkness and death, while the sunshine of life and heavenly blessedness is shining resplendently above and around them. Promising them liberty, they are brought into a worse bondage than before, a double bondage to sin and remorse and fearful forebodings, and to a vicarious dependence on the grace of priestly mediators, who may be lusting after their persons instead of seeking the salvation of their souls. And what can pastors in such a church do? If they refuse to present such persons for confirmation, this "fundamental rite" of *the church*

¹ Whately on Romish Errors, p. 161, Eng. ed. c. iii. § 6.

falls into neglect, and thus even if conscious of their unfitness, they may be tempted to hand them over to the bishop¹ to be confirmed, not in grace, but in their gracelessness and hopeless impenitency. And if such pastors are themselves evangelical, and refuse to present any but those who have given satisfactory evidence of their conversion, (not to say that their decision may be arbitrarily overruled by a Puseyite bishop)² of what value, we ask, in such a case, is the rite of confirmation, and what grace can it impart, which has not been already given, or which will not be received through a faithful use of the Lord's supper, and the other means

¹ So says Archbishop Whately, *Origin of Romish Errors*, p. 161, as above.

² See *Ecclesiastical Republicanism*, by the author, where this is shown, and the spiritual despotism *latent* in the canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church, is unmasked and developed. And if, as has occurred, a Puseyite bishop, who believes in all that Carey believed, and in all that Pusey has taught, even in his Sermon on the Eucharist, where a minister refused to baptize a child, could himself become sponsor and thus constrain baptism, why may he not also secure admittance to confirmation of those who have received *water-regeneration*, when they can say the creed, &c.

of holy living? The answer is and must be, none.

The conclusion, then, of the whole matter is, that to really converted and regenerated persons this rite is useless, if not rather positively dangerous, as it may lead them to rely upon it for some mysterious PRELATICAL grace, since they do not approach it until possessed of that very HEAVENLY grace which it is affirmed to convey, and which they, by the supposition, already enjoy; and that in reference to all others the rite is either "an empty and unmeaning form," "a dangerous snare," OF A CONFIRMATION IN IMPENITENCE AND SIN.

Right thankful may we be, therefore, that our churches are delivered from this ceremony, since the Devil has wiles and snares enough, without digging for him new and dangerous pitfalls. And most grateful should we be to God that this source of hatred, malice, and uncharitableness, which shuts up the bowels of compassion of Romanists and prelatists against all who reject it, has not been retained to poison the fountain of our feelings, and throw over so many, of whom we can hope charitably, the dark mantle of condemnation and death. And if, as

we have seen by the confession of its advocates, the participation of confirmation cannot prevent "*an almost universal defection*" among the regenerated and confirmed children of THE CHURCH, we need not fear the charge of presumption or rashness, if we hope better things of those upon whose heads the hands of consecrated prelates have never passed.

To conclude: either confirmation is essential to full membership in THE CHURCH, and therefore to salvation, or it is not. If it is, then what has become of the millions who have communicated in that church without baptism, or at least without confirmation? In Roman Catholic countries it is declared that in large dioceses, through the inability or indifference of the bishops, numbers die without confirmation.¹—"Such a sentiment," says Calvin,² "condemns all the apostles, and a number of martyrs, who, it is certain, had never received this unction. For the holy chrism, the perfusion of which would complete their Christianity, or rather make them Christians from being no Christians at all, had

¹ See in Willet's Sym. Pap., and Cartwright's Confut., p. 277, &c.

² Instit., b. iv. c. xix. § ix. p. 539, vol. 2.

not then been manufactured. But these chrismatics abundantly confute themselves, without my saying a word. For what number of their people do they anoint after baptism? Why then do they suffer such semi-Christians in their own community, from an imperfection which they might easily remedy? Why do they, with such supine negligence, suffer them to omit that which cannot be omitted without great criminality? Why do they not more rigidly insist upon a thing so necessary and indispensable to salvation; unless any one be prevented by sudden death? Surely while they suffer it to be so easily despised, they tacitly confess it not to be of so much importance as they pretend it to be."

Archdeacon Blackburne in his critical commentary on Archbishop's Secker's letter concerning bishops in America¹ argues "Shall we then lay it down for a rule, that it belongs to the nature of Episcopal churches, that all their members should be *confirmed*? If it does not, the colonists may do without it. And that it does not, appears from the practice, and indeed from the constitution of the Church of England. In several Dioceses there are no confirmations

¹ Philadelphia, 1771, p. 10.

for several years. By Canon cxii. if persons of the age of sixteen do not communicate, they are to be presented to the Archbishop, by the minister, churchwardens, &c. In consequence of this canon, thousands receive the communion who were never confirmed, because they never had an opportunity. And when such communicants present themselves for confirmation, they are told, it is not proper, after they have communicated; which shows that, how useful soever confirmation may be, where it can be had, where it cannot, it is, by the constitution of the Church of England herself, unnecessary. And after this, would it be sufficiently respectful to my Lords the Bishops, or indeed to our excellent establishment to say, that such and such people of Cumberland, for instance, or Northumberland, or the Welsh counties, are denied confirmation, unless they will go to London for it? Or that they are in effect prohibited the exercise of one part of their religion?"

I find, too, from Dalcho's History, that while it is true, as we have seen, that in all her other colonies, the members of the Church of England were allowed to get to heaven as well as they could without this "fundamental rite," that

confirmation was administered in South Carolina for the first time in the year 1813, "to a considerable number of persons many of whom were in advanced years."¹

Now if the grace of confirmation was essential to enable all these millions of souls to live holy lives, it was equally necessary to enable them to die holy and happy deaths; and where then can they all be now, if there is neither a purgatory nor a limbus patrum—where the negligence of their pastors here may be rectified, and their salvation completed?

And if, on the other hand, these facts show the utter absurdity and downright blasphemy of such a conclusion as to the eternal state of millions, it demonstrates the PRACTICAL UNBELIEF OF BOTH THE ROMISH AND THE PRELATICAL CHURCHES IN THE DIVINE ORIGIN OR NECESSITY OF THIS ORDINANCE; IMPRESSES UPON THE RITE ITSELF THE SEAL OF MAN'S DEVISING; AND STAMPS WITH UNUTTERABLE SCORN AND CONDEMNATION THE HARD-HEARTEDNESS OF THAT BIGOTRY WHICH, FOR THEIR REJECTION OF SUCH A RITE, CAN ANATHEMATIZE, EXCOMMUNICATE, AND EXCLUDE FROM COVENANTED MERCIES MILLIONS OF CHRIST'S FREE-BORN AND HEAVEN-BORN CHILDREN.

¹ See Hist. of the Pres. Ep. Ch. in S. C.

A P P E N D I X .

A FORM OF PUBLIC CHRISTIAN PROFESSION :

SCRIPTURAL, REASONABLE, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
PRACTICE OF THE PRIMITIVE AND OTHER CHURCHES.

WE will now offer some remarks on that form of public profession of religion, which is commonly used in Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in this country. Where this form has not been in use, and its many advantages therefore unknown, opposition to it may naturally be expected.—Against any thing which has the *appearance* of innovation there will always exist much prejudice, especially if what is thus enforced makes any demand upon self-denial, or requires any effort and feeling. In those prejudices which array themselves against a public introduction to the church and a public profession of faith, the author has in time past participated. Feeling confident, however, that it would not be employed without good reason, he carefully examined the subject, and the result was a very deep conviction of its importance and propriety. That others may look at it in the same point of light, and regard it with similar feelings

of approbation and interest, the grounds upon which this judgment was formed shall now be given. A public profession is, we think, of great importance,

1st. Because it is Scriptural.

2d. Because it is in accordance with the custom of the primitive church.

3d. Because it is in some form retained in every church; and

4th. Because it is reasonable and advantageous.

Such a form is Scriptural. To understand the allusions which are made to this subject in the New Testament, it will be necessary previously to consider the practice of the Jewish church, as this was in very many things imitated in the Christian church, and is particularly followed in the Presbyterian form of church government, which is modelled after the government and discipline of the Jewish Synagogue.

There is, then, sufficient evidence to prove that proselytes to Judaism, both they and their children, were introduced to full membership in the Jewish church by baptism and circumcision. This practice is thought by Jewish writers to be as old as the time of Jacob; and all the nation of Israel, as with one mouth, assert that they and their proselytes were always brought into the covenant by baptism. "Whosoever," says Maimonides, "any heathen will betake himself and be joined to the

covenant of Israel, and place himself under the wings of the divine majesty, and take the yoke of the law upon him voluntarily, circumcision, baptism, and oblation, are required: but if it be a woman, baptism and oblation;" and in the Babylonian Gemara it is written, "He is not a proselyte until he be circumcised and baptized."¹

It is also as unquestionable, that when candidates for admission to the Jewish church were thus baptized, the proselyte was examined as to his faith, and required to make a public profession of his belief. In this matter the Jews were very scrupulous, for the admission of a proselyte was deemed no light matter, since, if not truly sincere, such persons were thought to be very dangerous.² When a proselyte or proselytess came to be admitted into the Jewish church, it was therefore inquired whether the individual entered into that religion for riches, or preferment, or fear. If the answer was in the negative, the officiating minister then proceeded to state all the difficulties he would encounter in sustaining his profession; if still firm, the fundamental doctrines of the Jewish law were repeated to him with the penalties and rewards at-

¹ Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 55-56. See also vol. iii. p. 38, where infant baptism is taught. See also Lewis's Heb. Rep., vol. ii. p. 457.

² Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 60.

tached to them, and he was told that if obedient, he would obtain the life of the world to come: if disobedient, he would endure everlasting misery. All of which, if the individual truly professed that he believed and was willing to receive, he was forthwith circumcised.

When recovered from this painful operation, he was brought to the water, and while standing in it was again acquainted with the great and small commandments, and upon signification of his assent to them, or if an infant, upon the assent of the parents, baptism was administered.¹

Such is a brief declaration of the order pursued by the Jews, in the introduction of a proselyte to the full participation of all the privileges of their church. If necessary, we might abundantly confirm the truth of these statements here given. All that is essential to our present purpose is the fact, that in the admission of a converted heathen to the Jewish church, some form of public renunciation of his previous errors, and adoption of his new faith, was adopted. This fact will not, we presume, be questioned by any.

With this in view, let us then proceed to examine certain passages in the New Testament, which, it is to be remembered, were written by Jews, and

¹ See Lightfoot, vol. ii. 60, 61; vol. v. 62-64; and Lewis's Heb. Repub. vol. ii. pp. 459-467.

primarily with a special reference to Jews, who were always the first to whom the divine message of salvation was presented. We shall find that there is, in some passages, a manifest reference allusion to this familiar and existing practice, while others can only be rescued from apparent obscurity by interpreting them as having reference to it.

There are a number of passages in which the very word profession, occurs in some one of its forms. Such are the following:

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
1 Tim. vi. 12.¹

"That if thou shalt confess, with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. x. 9.

"Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Heb. iv. 14.

"While by the experiment of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed subjection unto

¹ These words, says Schleusner, are to be explained of that ingenuous and truly sincere profession, which in reverence is made to God—which we have made to Him of faith in this High Priest. See his Lex. in Vet. Test.

the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men" (2 Cor. ix. 13); —that is, "for the obedience of your confession to the gospel, or your obedient profession of the gospel."

"Whosoever therefore will confess me before men, him also will I confess before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. x. 3.

"Also I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man confess before the angels of God." Luke xii. 8.¹

¹ The original word in these passages, is *ὁμολογία*, and the verb *ὁμολογέω*. I have carefully examined into the meaning of these words, in the Greek Lexicographers. Schleusner gives as the first and proper meaning of the noun, "assent, consent—a covenant;" and by metonymy, "that concerning which it is thus covenanted or agreed"—also, "a league." In the Septuagint, the word answers also to the word, vow, and signifies, "voluntary oblation." Bretschneider sanctions this interpretation, adding, as a full New Testament meaning, "public profession." Leigh gives the meaning, "to bear witness of one, plainly and sincerely, and to acknowledge us as his own; frankly and boldly to profess what we hold in matters of religion." Whence in ecclesiastical history, those professions which Christians made publicly before their judges, and in view of torture and death, were called by this name, and by a corresponding one, confessions. [See Leigh's Crit. Sacra, and Suiceri Thesaurus, p. 475, tom. ii.] In the Greek

If it were necessary, we might take up these several passages in detail, and inquire whether they are not all founded upon the supposition of some form of Christian profession, correspondent to what had been always customary in the Jewish Synagogue, and by which those who embraced the gospel were introduced into the church, and became publicly known as the disciples of Christ—which would therefore expose them to opposition and reproach—call attention to their conduct—and which they would feel bound to maintain, even unto death. That such is the allusion, can scarcely be doubted. Nor is that more general explanation commonly given of these passages, inconsistent with this ; but on the contrary, corroborative of it. There are, however, other references in the New Testament, in addition to these, which can be explained only on the assumption of the truth we are endeavoring to establish. We can show very clearly, for instance, that in the primitive church, those who manifested a desire to join the church, were arranged in classes, where they were for some time instructed in the Christian doctrines, and when prepared, were publicly baptized, on their making a profession of their faith.¹ Now, to this practice there

writers, this term means, “openly to say, affirm, witness, and declare, etc., what is thus openly affirmed.”

¹ See a dissertation on the Catechetical Instruction of

seems indubitable reference in the New Testament. Thus, in his epistle to the Romans (ii. 20), the apostle addresses the Jew as one who was "an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hath the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law." The correspondent Jewish practice is here plainly mentioned, and allusion evidently made to the catechumen and his class, the Jews being accustomed to call their proselytes "new born infants or babes."

In Rom. vi. 17, we read of "a form of doctrine which was delivered unto you," which Dr. Hammond thus paraphrases: "that summary of Christian doctrine, to the belief and practice of which ye were delivered up and solemnly consecrated in your baptism."¹

In 2 Tim. i. 13, allusion is also made to this "form of sound words," which Archbishop Tillotson, in accordance with Doddridge and others, explains of that profession of faith which was made by Christians at their baptism.² This also must be the meaning of 2 Tim. ii. 2, where the words "many witnesses," seem plainly to refer to the

the Apostles, by Walch, in the *Biblical Repertory*, for 1827, pp. 40-88.

¹ See also Doddridge's *Paraphrase*, Macknight, Bloomfield, Benson, Rosenmüller, etc., etc.

² See also Whitby on 2 Tim. ii. 2.

congregation of people, who were present at the time of Timothy's baptism when he made a public profession of his faith.

In Heb. v. 12, it is said, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." That is, "whereas you ought now to be fit to teach or prepare others for baptism, you require again to be instructed with the catechumens."

In Heb. vi. 1, the apostle urges those whom he addressed not to be satisfied with that amount of knowledge they had obtained while preparing for their Christian profession, but to seek for a more enlarged acquaintance with the Christian doctrine. "The doctrine of baptisms," (or of baptism, the plural being used for the singular,) cannot receive any other satisfactory explanation than "the form of doctrine which was professed at the baptisms of Christians;" or if the plural is retained, it will refer to the knowledge of the difference between the Jewish and Christian baptismal profession.¹

Luke i. 14, "That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instruct-

¹ This passage is illustrated at length by Walch, in the *Biblical Repertory* for 1827, pp. 59-67, as containing the topics of the catechetical instruction of the apostles.

ed." There is here the same allusion. The object of the Evangelist was to establish Theophilus more thoroughly in "the belief of those things which were taught him in order to prepare him for baptism."¹

A similar phrase occurs in Acts xviii. 25, "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord: and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." Here, as in Luke, the Greek word is "catechumenos," that is, one catechetically instructed, or instructed as a catechumen,² in order to baptism. So in Gal. vi. 6, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." The first part of the sentence may be rendered, "Let him that is thus catechetically instructed," which words would be unintelligible without the explanation we have given.

The necessity of this open profession of the fundamentals of religion in cases of adult baptism, or by those who brought their children to the Lord in this appointed sacrament, is taught by Christ himself in Matt. xxviii. 19-20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I

¹ See Hammond in loc.

² See Poole's Synopsis in loc.

have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The ministers of Christ are here commanded to "disciple all nations"—that is, so to instruct them that they may be prepared for a profession of their faith, and by thus becoming disciples may be thus introduced to the Christian church.

To these examples may be added Heb. x. 23, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." "Faith is here," says Owen,¹ "taken in both the principal acceptations of it; namely, that faith whereby we believe, and the faith or doctrine which we do believe. Of both which we make the same profession; of one as the inward principle; of the other, as the outward rule. This solemn profession of our faith is two-fold. 1. Initial. 2. By the way of continuation in all the acts and duties required thereunto. The first is a solemn giving up of ourselves to Christ, in a professed subjection unto the gospel, and the ordinances of divine worship therein contained. This of old was done by all men, at their first accession unto God in the assemblies of the church. The apostle calls it, the beginning of our confidence, or subsistence in Christ and the church, chap. iii. 6.—And it was ordinarily, in the primitive times, accompanied with excellent graces and privileges."

¹ On the Hebrews, vol. vi. p. 525.

So also the passage in 1 Peter, iii. 21, "The like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us—not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but *the answer of a good conscience toward God.*" "The word translated 'answer,' " says Steiger, "is most commonly referred to the questions which were preferred to the candidates for baptism, and which contained a confession of their faith, and also a renunciation of the Devil. (Comp. August. ad Catech. l. iv. c. 1: Ambrose de Sacrament. c. ii. Lo Tertullian Antigorasticus, Cyprian.) This very generally received interpretation Grotius and Clericus endeavored to confirm from the judicial phraseology."¹

There is an expression in 1 Cor. xv. 29, which has excited much controversy, but which, in this view, is susceptible of explanation: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" The meaning of this much controverted passage appears to be this: "If there is no resurrection, why have such individuals, at their baptism, professed their faith in this resurrection of the dead, as being made certain to them by the fact of the resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of them that sleep? Why, if they have any doubts on the subject of the resurrection, did they make this public declaration of the faith in which this doctrine is ex-

¹ Steiger on the First Epistle of Peter, vol. ii. p. 241.

pressed?" That this interpretation of this passage is most probable, and was early adopted in the church, we might adduce abundant testimony to prove.¹

Hear also the words of the apostle as contained in his Epistle to the Ephesians, iv. 4: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." We are here reminded, as we may interpret it, that there is "one body of doctrine which is every where professed at baptism." This, we apprehend, is what is meant also by "the mystery of faith," which is to be held in a pure conscience (1 Tim. iii. 9), "the mystery of godliness" upon which, as upon a pillar, the permanence and purity of the Christian church rests—that "truth as it is in Jesus," to which, at baptism, every believer had given his assent. This is that "*faith*" for which, as the apostle Jude admonishes us, we are "earnestly to contend, as having been delivered to the saints," not only in the sacred volume, but in that public profession also which was made of it on entering the Christian church. This form of profession was also, we think, in the apostle's view, when Christians are declared by him to

¹ See a Treatise on, in Thesaurus Philolog. tom. ii. pp. 562-564; see also Suiceri Thesaurus, where he quotes Tertullian, Peter Martyr, etc., etc. Also Dr. Hammond on the New Testament.

be "baptized into Jesus," and "into his death," and "into Christ." The ordinance of baptism was the instituted way by which public admission into the church of Christ was obtained; and when persons were thus introduced, and as necessary to such admission, a public profession of their faith was given in the presence of the many witnesses who would be, on such an occasion, necessarily convened. This gave origin to the Christian symbols or creeds, which at first were very brief, because little controversy had arisen upon points of doctrine, but which were gradually extended to their present form, as one and another doctrine esteemed fundamental was disputed or denied. This symbol was, to the early Christians, as an ancient writer beautifully says, what similar armor, and the same watchword, and the same mode of combat were to an army; it preserved them from stratagem and deceit—it discovered the traitorous hypocrite who would come to them to deceive and destroy—while it bound them to each other and in one solid mass, by the force of sympathy and mutual agreement.¹

We have thus, with all brevity, made a very cursory examination of the New Testament, in its bearing upon this subject. Our hypothesis is, that from the very beginning of Christianity a public profession of their faith, more or less formal

¹ See quoted in Suiceri Thes. vol. ii. p. 1065, fol.

detailed, was required and given, by all who were added to the church of Christ. We felt authorized to make this supposition from the fact, that such a profession of faith, according to the usage of the Jewish synagogue service, was demanded, a *san essential* prerequisite to an enrollment among true Israelites, from all their proselytes. Of this fact there can be no reasonable doubt. Now it is also admitted by the most learned investigators into the origin of the Christian church, that being founded at first among the Jews, and addressing itself to the Jews, it was moulded in its ecclesiastical forms and polity by the usages of the Jewish Synagogue. There is, therefore, the greatest possible antecedent probability, that the forms and order of worship in the Christian church would be found strictly analogous, as far as admissible, to those followed in the Jewish Synagogue. It is also further evident that this being so, and the Christian worship and government being accordant to a form and order already in use, and perfectly familiar to all the churches, and to all who were particularly addressed in the New Testament, we are not to expect very *distinct* and *positive* declarations on subjects about which there would be no discussion, no difficulty, and for which declarations therefore, there would be no urgent need. All which we are reasonably to expect in the New Testament will be, that if such practices were introduced into the Christian church

its language will be found adapted to such existing customs—that it will not contradict and plainly set them aside—or that it will contain expressions and allusions which harmonize with them, or appear evidently to imply their existence.¹

Now when with this view we open the inspired volume and peruse its contents, we do in fact find that it most wonderfully accords with these previous expectations—that it does harmonize with the supposition of the transference to the Christian church, of those regulations of the Jewish Synagogue, which were not a part of the Jewish ceremonial, and therefore did not pass away with it—that it does frequently imply their continuance—that it does appear frequently to allude to them—and that only on this supposition, many passages can be fully understood. We are therefore brought, by the amount of this incidental testimony, (which will not be injured should any one or a few of the interpretations on which it rests be questioned,) to the conviction

¹ Hence it is that, as Presbyterians, we rightly argue that, inasmuch as in the Jewish Synagogue there were Bishops, or Presbyters, or Angels, Elders and Deacons, the very silence of Scripture as to any other or higher orders of ministers, and the *express* use of these terms, thus used and thus familiar, is irrefragable proof that no other officers than these were continued after the apostles' time in the Christian church.

that a form of public profession of faith was used in the Christian church from its very commencement.¹

¹ That the argument founded upon these incidental allusions is strong, is shown from the rule of interpretation laid down by eminent writers, and which is thus stated by Bishop Bethel—"Undesigned and incidental testimonies, which do not come down to us in the shape of precepts or dogmatical determinations, but of appeals to the converts, and allusions to received opinions or customs, are a strong confirmation of the truth and general reception of the opinions to which they allude."

And that these interpretations of Scripture are not novel, may be shown by the authority of Principal Hill, who thus speaks, in his *Lectures on Divinity*: (see vol. iii. pp. 301, 302.)

"The following phrases, which occur in different epistles, 'the form of sound words, the principles of the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of baptism,' probably mean some such short summary of Christian doctrine, as we know was used in the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles, for the instruction of persons who came to be baptized. Peter's joining to baptism, 1 Pet. iii. 21, 'the answer of a good conscience toward God,' seems to imply, that in the apostolic age, questions were always proposed to them. And this is confirmed by the expression, Heb. x. 22, 'Having our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of our faith.' The most natural interpretation of which words is, that persons at their baptism, were required to make a declaration of their faith;

Having thus ascertained, by an examination of the New Testament, that it contains numerous and evident allusions to the pre-existent custom in the Jewish Synagogue, of requiring from all its proselytes before their full admission to it, a public profession of their faith; and also many passages and allusions which imply the adoption of such a practice by the founders of Christianity, we are prepared to inquire into the order pursued by the primitive churches. If it shall be found that their practice accords with what we are thus led to believe, was pursued by the apostles—and that in this practice there was, as to the *principle*, perfect unanimity, and unvarying consent, while in the order actually pursued there was the greatest permitted freedom

and we know that, if not from the beginning, yet in very early times, there was joined with this declaration, a renunciation of former vices, and a promise to lead a good life.

“It appears from this deduction, that baptism was, in its original institution, a solemn method of assuming the profession of the Christian religion, a mark of distinction between the disciples of Christ and those who held any other system of faith.”

See also Bishop Andrewes on the Decalogue, p. 7. Fol. Lond. 1650.

The Magdeburgh Centuriators allow that there were four kinds of confessions allowed in Scripture, of which this was one. Cent. i. in Gilleaspie's Aaron's Rod. p. 172.

and variety, we shall have no reason left for regarding this custom as unauthoritative, or as one of but little practical importance.

Now, in inquiries into the worship and order of the early Christian church we find it was UNIVERSALLY, AND WITHOUT ANY EXCEPTION, THE CUSTOM OF EVERY CHURCH, IN ADMITTING MEMBERS, TO REQUIRE FROM THEM A PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THAT FORM OR COVENANT OF FAITH WHICH EACH WAS AT LIBERTY TO FRAME FOR ITSELF FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.¹ This may be proved by a reference to the nature and design of creeds, and to the order actually pursued in the admission of members.² "The creed" was early called a symbol. This word was applied to those signs or marks delivered to the novitiates of heathen mysteries, when admitted to the knowledge of those peculiar doctrines which were hidden from the multitude.³ By the use of these symbols, those who were thus initiated knew each other, and were freely received into the nocturnal observances, and more secret mysteries of the body to which they were attached. The

¹ They were thus introduced, both privately, as Origen shows, *Contra Cels.* c. iii.; and publicly, in the Christian assemblies, in reference to which Cyprian denominates them "audientes." *Epistle* 117, l. iii.

² See Hurd's *History of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 235.

³ See full on, in *King on the Creed*, pp. 15-22.

creed was in like manner called a symbol, because it also was concealed from the idolatrous part of the community; and only made known *fully* to those who seemed sincerely anxious to be received into the Christian church. And the very purpose for which the creed was originally adopted was,—that it might be a form of profession, and serve as a sign or token of mutual recognition, harmony, and peace. Now, although the Apostles' Creed, as it is commonly called, was not framed, at least in its present form, by the apostles themselves, nor yet all at once, certainly some form or creed existed at a very early period, though afterwards modified as circumstances required.¹ That this was the true origin of the creed is declared by Bishop Pearson—"From this sacred form of baptism did the church derive the rule of faith, requiring the profession of belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before they could be baptized in their name." "They who were converted to Christianity were first taught, not the bare names, but the explications and description of them in a brief, easy, and familiar way, which when they had rendered, acknowledged, and professed, they were baptized in them; and these being regularly and constantly used, made up the rule of faith, that *is*, the creed. The truth of which may sufficiently be made appa-

¹ King *do.* p. 38; and Bingham, vol. iii. p. 90.

rent to any, who shall seriously consider the constant practice of the church, from the first age unto this present, of delivering the rule of faith unto those who were to be baptized, and so requiring of themselves or their sureties an express recitation, profession, or acknowledgment of the creed."¹

The term "baptism," thus came to be used by the Fathers as synonymous with "a profession of faith." Thus Clemens says, "How can we hope to enter the kingdom of God, unless we keep our baptism pure and undefiled."² He thus calls baptism a "seal,"³ Ignatius says, "Let your baptism remain as your shield, your faith as your helmet."⁴ So Hermas calls baptism "a great and holy vocation,"⁵ that is, a "token of external profession." Thus Jerome "The symbol of our faith and hope is not written on paper, and with ink, but in the fleshly tables of the heart."⁶ Peter Chrysologus, an au-

¹ See on the Creed, pp. 47, 48 ; see a similar testimony by Schmucker, in *Bib. Reposit.* 1838, p. 120 ; and in proof of this point see numerous quotations from the Fathers, in Pearson on the Creed, p. 19.

² Clem. 2 ad Cor. vii. ³ Id. 10. 3. ⁴ Ep. 37. 6.

⁵ Hermas Com. 4. 3. Thus also, Mr. Newman speaks of the "baptismal profession, the creed of the church," *Lect.* pp. 272 and 281.

⁶ Ep. ad Psam. ix.

thor of the fifth century, frequently uses similar language.¹

¹ See in Hinds' Rise of Christ. vol. ii. p. 237.

That each church was anciently at liberty to frame its own creed, may be clearly proved. Hinds himself, an Episcopalian of Queen's College, Oxford, in his History of the Rise of Christianity, testifies :

"This being so, however intimate the union may be among orthodox churches, the particular circumstances of each may require a different formula of belief, as well as of conformity ; even as two confederate monarchies, or democracies, would not require precisely the same statutes and forms of administration. And so, although the Apostles' Creed be the substance of the earliest creeds, and the precise language, to a certain extent, yet there may have been many creeds from the first, shaped by each church with reference to its peculiar dangers of faith from without, or the prejudices of its own members within. Thus, as far back as we can trace the history of the early creeds, that of Jerusalem was always distinct from that of Cesarea or Antioch ; and all these, again, from those of Alexandria, or of Rome : and this during the period of harmony between these churches.

"The gradual infringement on the independent character of each separate church, until it was extinguished by the papal usurpation, is a subject well worthy of more detailed discussion than is compatible with the limits of this inquiry. Among the primitive churches, each formed its own creed, its own liturgy, and regulated its own ceremonies and discipline. The first encroachment took its rise

Let us now attend to the mode by which, at this period, members were admitted into the Christian

from an apparent convenience. When the ruling powers of the world were generally Christians, each kingdom was made to have the same liturgy, etc. for all its churches. To give an instance: when Spain and Gallia Narbonensis became one distinct kingdom, it was decreed by a council, that there should be exact uniformity through all the churches of these provinces.* The same principle which thus produced an exact conformity among all the churches of the same nation, became the ground of enforcing it, at length, on all the churches of the empire. The first change was in the boundary line of a church, which was made political instead of ecclesiastical. Men's minds being familiarized to this, and churches being considered as national bodies, it was no very revolting step which was taken by the Romish church, when it made itself the metropolitan of national churches; and gradually claimed that conformity to its decrees, and that obedience to its laws, which the metropolitan church of every nation had acquired a right to expect from all churches within the political pale of its jurisdiction. It was this miscalled Christian unity which the reformation violated; and it is against

* "When churches became subject to one political head, and national churches arose from that distinction, then it was thought convenient by all the Bishops of such a nation, to unite more closely in rituals and circumstantials of divine worship, as well as faith and substantials." Bingham's *Ecc. Antiq.*, book xvi. ch. i. sec. 13.

church. At a time when Christianity was not established, but was nevertheless spreading, many indi-

such a universal catholic church, that all Protestants are accused of being guilty of heresy and schism."*

The creed in use in the Eastern church, was very different from the Apostles' Creed.† So is there the greatest variety in the form of Renunciation, where we might most expect exact uniformity. The reader may see in Clarkson on Liturgies, pp. 105, 106, 107, *more than twenty variations* in this form of words as already referred to.

"And thus we find [this writer adds],‡ not only those of the Greek and Latin churches differing, or such as lived at a greater distance, and in the parts of the empire remotest one from another, but those of the same country and the same church, where, if any where, uniformity is to be looked for; we may observe it in Tertullian, Cyprian, Optatus, and Augustine.

"Nor do several persons only differ herein among themselves, but we may see in divers instances, one and the same person express this usage variously; whereas, he that is not circumscribed by others, nor will be imposed on by the imperious, is constant to himself many times, and varies not in the use of as many, or more words than this form consisted of; and so it is represented by Cyprian, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, and Origen.

* See Hinde's History of the Rise of Christianity, vol. ii. pp. 253-255.

† See Apost. Const., b. vii. ch. 42.

‡ See pp. 108, 109.

viduals would be frequently baptized, who had been educated in the principles and practices of hea-

"Now, if in so short a sentence as this, and that universally used in some terms or other, with a general harmony as to the sense, and wherein also there is nothing of prayer, and so none of that reason which there is for freedom in praying, they were not limited, nor did tie themselves to a set of words, who can believe they were, or would have suffered themselves to be confined to an unvariable form of words in praying at baptism ?

"And that there were none limited to any forms of prayer, is made evident, more directly by that of Basil, where, mentioning the several prayers used in baptizing, he declares there were none of them to be found in writing."

As it is of importance that this point should be well understood, we will adduce the further testimony of Bishop Burnet.

"These words of his do import a standard, or *fixed formula*, by which all doctrines were to be examined. Some have inferred from them, that the apostles delivered that creed which goes under their name, every where in the same form of words. But there is great reason to doubt of this, since the first apologists of Christianity, when they deliver a short abstract of the Christian faith to all, vary from one another, both as to the order, and as to the words themselves ; which they would not have done, if the churches had all received one settled form from the apostles. They would all have used the same words, and neither more nor less.

"In the first ages, in which the bishops or clergy of the

thenism. Of course, baptism was to such the seal of their initiation into the faith of Christ.

several churches could not meet together in Synods to examine the doctrine of the new bishop, the method upon which the circumstances of those ages put them, was this : the new bishop sent round him, and chiefly to the bishops of the more eminent sees, the profession of his faith, according to the form that was fixed in his church ; and when the neighboring bishops were satisfied in this, they held communion with him, and not only owned him for a bishop, but maintained such a commerce with him as the state of that time did admit of.

“ But as some heresies sprung up, there were enlargements made in several churches for the condemning of those, and for excluding such as held them, from their communion. The council of Nice examined many of those creeds, and out of them they put their creed in a fuller form. The addition made by the council of Constantinople, was put into the creeds of some particular churches, several years before that council met. So that, though it received its authority from that council, yet they rather confirmed an article which they found in the creeds of some churches, than made a new one.”

In rejecting the claim of what is called the Apostles' Creed, to any such origin as the name imports, he further adds : “ None of the first writers agree in delivering their faith in a certain form of words ; every one of them gives an abstract of his faith, in words that differ, both from one another, and from this form. From thence it is clear, that there was no common form delivered to all the churches.”

That they might be prepared for this open renunciation of idolatry, and this solemn profession of Christianity, they were, for some months previous under preparatory instruction, during which time they were called *catechumenoi*, in the Greek church, and *competentes* in the Latin church; the former implying by its derivation, that they were "instructed by catechists," the latter, that they were seeking together the honor of being initiated into Christianity. When they had been thus sufficiently instructed, and had given satisfactory evidence of their fitness, they were brought before the congregation where, previous to their baptism, (if not already baptized,) three things were required of them.

1st. A separation from, or renunciation of, the Devil.

2nd. A covenant of obedience, or the giving themselves up to the government of Christ.

3d. A profession of faith.

By the first, in a form of words prepared for them they renounced the Devil, his works, his worship, and all his pomp. By the second, they promised to live in obedience to the laws of Christ; and by the third, they declared their faith in the fundamental articles of Christian doctrine, as embraced in that

Of the Apostles' Creed he further says, "Ruffin was the first that published it (in the 4th century), it is true he published it as the creed of the church of Aquileia."

particular form of creed which was in use in each separate church. Every church required the catechumen to repeat its own creed, which was thus a public declaration that his faith was the same with that of the church into which he was to be received.¹ Irenæus, who lived in the second century, and who was acquainted with a Presbyter who had conversed with the immediate successors of the apostles, mentions, that at baptism, the minister made an exhortation, and proposed a form of confession to the person to be initiated.² Justin Martyr, who lived still earlier, and who describes the ceremonies of baptism, says it was only administered to those who, to their confession of faith, added also a promise or word, that they would live according to the rules of Christianity³—they must, says he, both profess to believe the truth of those things which they had been taught, and also promise to live answerably to their knowledge.⁴ The same thing is certified by Tertullian, who lived in the second century, and by the author of the Apostolic Constitutions.⁵ Rufinus (A. D. 397) relates that in his days, “the ancient custom was retained at Rome,

¹ See Hill's Lectures, vol. iii. p. 254.

² Lardner, vol. viii. pp. 435, 6 ; and Bingham, vol. iii. p. 217.

³ See Bingham, vol. iii. p. 226. ⁴ Do. p. 229.

⁵ Do. p. 24.

for persons to be baptized publicly to recite the creed:"¹ and Salvian, who lived about the same time, says, that at baptism, "Christians professed their faith in God, the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his Son." In all the accounts we have of baptism in ancient writers," says Bingham, "there is express mention of this profession, and of its accordance with apostolic practice."² Some, in the days of Augustine (A. D. 395), pleaded hard to be exempted from the vow, although they willingly made the renunciation and profession, against whom that father wrote his work "Of Faith and Works."³ Others wished to shorten the form of profession, but none questioned its Scriptural propriety.⁴ This profession was made very solemnly; in some cases being repeated three times with the hands and eyes lifted to Heaven, and even audible, so as to be heard by those present. It was also, at first, made in public before many witnesses, which was a circumstance grounded, as was believed, upon apostolical practice, and rarely dispensed with.⁵

"It was usual at Rome," St. Augustine tells us, "to make this confession publicly in the church, in some eminent place appointed for the purpose, that

¹ King on the Creed, p. 30.

² Bingham, vol. iii. p. 221.

³ Do. 224.

⁴ Bingham, vol. iii. p. 228.

⁵ See Neander on, in the 4th century in the Biblical Repertory for 1832, pp. 21, 221.

they may be seen and heard by all the congregation. But sometimes, to favor the modesty of some very bashful persons, who could not speak without trembling in such an awful assembly, the presbyters received their confession in private: and this they offered to Victorinus, a famous rhetorician, upon his conversion; but he chose rather to make his confession in public, saying there was no salvation in rhetoric, and yet he had always taught that in public, and, therefore, it would not become him to be afraid of making a public confession of God's word before the meek flock of Christ, who had never been afraid to repeat his own words in the schools of the heathen, who, in comparison of Christians, were only to be reputed madmen."¹

That this order was not peculiar to the Western churches, but was also found in the Eastern churches, will appear from the Apostolical Constitutions, which is a collection of the usages of that church, compiled probably in the fourth or fifth century. The person to be baptized, is to be "catechised in the word of piety, and instructed in the knowledge of God;" and he is also "to learn how to renounce the Devil, and the joining himself to Christ," and being thus prepared, he declared his renunciation in these words:

"I renounce Satan and his works, and his pomps,

¹ Bingham, vol. iii. p. 231.

and his worships, and his angels, and his inventions, and all things that are under him. And after this renunciation, let him in his association say, I associate myself to Christ, and believe, and am baptized into one unbegotten being, the only true God, Almighty, the Father of Christ, the Creator and Maker of all things, from whom are all things; and into the Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, the first born of the whole creation, who, before the ages was begotten, by the good pleasure of the Father, by whom all things were made, both those in heaven, and those on earth, visible and invisible, who in the last days descended from heaven, and took flesh, and was born of the holy Virgin Mary, and did converse holily, according to the laws of his God and Father, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died for us, and rose again from the dead after his passion the third day, and ascended into the heavens, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and again is to come at the end of the world with glory, to judge the quick and the dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end. And I am baptized into the Holy Ghost, that is, the comforter, who brought in all the saints from the beginning of the world, but was afterwards sent to the apostles by the Father, according to the promise of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ; and after the apostles, to all those that believe in the Holy Catholic church. Into the resurrection of the flesh, and into the remis-

sion of sins, and into the kingdom of heaven, and in to the life of the world to come."¹

When this form was, to any extent, first discontinued in the church, we are not able precisely to state. When it was left off, says Bishop Andrews, the church soon became darkened and overspread with ignorance.² That it was substantially, and in some form adopted by the reformers, he affirms. Erasmus thought it very important, that baptized children should have the meaning and importance of baptism, and the profession made in it, explained to them—and that if, after being catechetically prepared, they ratified this profession, they should be considered as members of the Catholic church.³

A confession of faith, which was an enlargement of the apostles' creed, was early adopted in the English congregation at Geneva, and received and approved by the Church of Scotland, in the beginning of the reformation.⁴

Calvin's views on this subject, may be seen from the following quotation from his Institutes:—

"It was an ancient custom in the church, for the

¹ Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, B. vii. sect. 41.

² See on the Decalogue, pp. 7, 8, fol.

³ Dupin, 16th cent. p. 36.

⁴ This beautiful form may be seen in Irving's *Confessions of Faith of the Church of Scotland*, pp. 120-123; and in Dunlop's *Confessions of Faith*.

children of Christians, alter they were come to the years of discretion, to be presented to the Bishop, in order to fulfil that duty which was required of adults who offered themselves to baptism. For such persons were placed among the catechumens, till being duly instructed in the mysteries of Christianity, they were enabled to make a confession of their faith before the Bishop and all the people.—Therefore, they who had been baptized in their infancy, because they had not then made such a confession of faith before the church, at the close of childhood, or the commencement of adolescence, were again presented by their parents, and were examined by the Bishop, according to the form of the catechism which was then in common use.

“I sincerely wish that we retained this custom, which I have stated was practised among the ancients, before this abortive image of a sacrament, (that is, confirmation,) made its appearance. For it was not such a confirmation as the Romanists pretend, which cannot be mentioned without injury to baptism, but a catechetical exercise, in which children or youths used to deliver an account of their faith, in the presence of the church. Now, it would be the best mode of catechetical instruction, if a formulary were written for this purpose, containing and stating in a familiar manner, all the articles of our religion in which the church of the faithful ought to agree, without any controversy;

a boy of ten years of age *might present himself to make a confession of his faith*; he might be questioned on all the articles, and give suitable answers: if he were ignorant of any, or did not fully understand them, he should be taught. *Thus the church would witness his profession of the only true and pure faith*, in which all the people of the faithful unanimously worship the one God. If this discipline were observed in the present day, it would certainly sharpen the inactivity of some parents, who carelessly neglect the instruction of their children, as a thing in which they have no concern, but which, in that case, they could not omit without public disgrace: there would be more harmony of faith among Christian people, nor would many betray such great ignorance and want of information: some would not be easily carried away with novel and strange tenets: in short, all would have a regular acquaintance with Christian doctrine.”¹

In the directory of church government anciently contended for, and, as far as the times would permit, practised by the first Nonconformists in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and which was drawn up by the famous and learned Thomas Cartwright, it is enjoined—

“Let them which before have not been received to the Lord’s table, when they first desire to come to

¹ Calvin’s Instit., B. iv. ch. xix. vol. ii. pp. 535–542.

it, give their names to the minister seven days before the communion, that if there be any cause of hinderance, there may be stay made betime, but if there be no such thing, let them proceed (where need may be) to the examination of their faith, before the communion. Let them only be admitted to the communion, *that have made confession of their faith, and submitted themselves to the discipline*; unless they shall bring letters testimonial of good credit from some other place, or shall approve themselves by some other sufficient testimony.”¹

During the discussions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, we are informed that, in the report of the committee concerning baptism, it was debated, “whether the parent, at the baptizing of his child, is to answer any question or make any profession of his faith and stipulation, on behalf of the child.” “The Scots,” says Lightfoot, in his Journal, “did urge it mightily, *because of the use of it in all the reformed churches.*”²

In the directory of worship, drawn up by that assembly, and still retained by the Presbyterian church in this country, it is declared:

“Those who are to be admitted to sealing ordinances, shall be examined as to their knowledge and piety.

¹ See Neal's Puritans, vol. v. app. p. 18.

² See Lightfoot's Works, vol. iii. p. 315.

“When unbaptized persons apply for admission into the church, they shall, in ordinary cases, after giving satisfaction with respect to their knowledge and piety, MAKE A PUBLIC PROFESSION OF THEIR FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CONGREGATION; and thereupon be baptized.”¹

That such forms of covenanting were in use among the Puritans, may appear from the confession of faith, drawn up and publicly signed by all those who, in 1629, arrived at Salem, in New England, and laid the foundation of the church of Christ in this country.

Baxter, in his Reformed Liturgy, which was presented before the Westminster Assembly for acceptance, there enjoins, that no individual “shall be admitted by the minister to the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, until they have, at years of discretion, understood the meaning of their baptismal covenant, *and with their own mouths, and their own consent, OPENLY BEFORE THE CHURCH RATIFIED AND CONFIRMED, AND ALSO promised, that by the grace of God, they will evermore endeavor themselves faithfully to observe and keep such things as by their mouth and confession they have assented to.*”² He adds, “If the person be able and willing, let

¹ See Directory for Worship, ch. ix. sec. 3 and 4, on which see some observations at the end of the Discourse.

² Baxter’s Works, vol. xv. p. 493.

him, before the congregation, give the aforesaid account at large, of his knowledge, faith, and obedience; but if unable to do so, let him publicly assent to what has been privately given to the minister."¹

It is shown by many and undeniable proofs, in Mr. Wilson's Historical Inquiry into the principles, opinions, and usages of the English Presbyterians, from the restoration of Charles II, that they uniformly required a public profession of faith from all who were admitted to the church, as they did from all who were ordained, until somewhere about the latter end of the 18th century, when error had greatly increased. This practice they believed to be conformable to primitive and apostolic usage. He makes the following quotation, as illustrative of their views:

"But as to the use of *public professions of faith*, to satisfy the church for the admittance of members, or to satisfy other churches to hold communion with any particular church, a form of words, which is neither obscure by too much conciseness, nor tedious or tautological by a needless multiplication of

¹ In the conference towards a compromise, in the reign of Charles I., Mr. Baxter proposed, among other things, "that the baptismal covenant might be explicitly owned by all who come to the sacrament." Neal's Puritans, vol. iv. p. 685.

words, I take to be the fittest. To which ends, and because the ancient churches had once a happy union on those terms, I think that this is all that should be required of any church or member (ordinarily) to be professed:—

“In general, I do believe all that is contained in the sacred canonical Scriptures, and particularly, I believe all explicitly contained in the ancient creed; and I desire all that is contained in the Lord’s prayer, and I resolve upon obedience to the ten commandments, and whatever else I can learn of the will of God.”¹

After the restoration, in a paper of proposals, addressed by the Presbyterian clergy to his majesty, one request was, that “*a personal public owning of the baptismal covenant*, might precede an admission to the Lord’s table.”² That such a practice was not uncommon to our nonconformist forefathers, will further appear from a form of public covenanting, adopted by the Rev. Matthew Mead and his church, in 1679.³

In the work of the Rev. John Willison, on “The Church’s Danger, and Minister’s Duty,” he urges upon ministers the necessity of carefully instructing the people. After giving a series of questions, on

¹ See page 178.

² From Calmy’s *Life of Baxter*, pp. 139–141, quoted in *Wilson’s Hist. Inq.* p. 29.

³ See in his *Sermons*, p. 19.

which they are to be examined, he adds, "Thus let the ministers take pains to instruct young folks in the nature and articles of the covenant of grace, and to have them engaged with some solemnity, to own and adhere to them, at their first admission to the Lord's supper; and let them, with solemn and fervent prayer, recommend and give up those young communicants unto the Lord. Such a course hath been found, by experience, very much to contribute to the welfare and prosperity of this church."¹

This custom was also preserved in the French Reformed churches. In the preface to the Liturgy, established by the churches in the principality of Neufchatel and Valengin, we are informed that, "during these two weeks immediately preceding the communion, general catechetical instruction is given on every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, after twelve o'clock; and on these catechisms, the catechumens who present themselves to be received for the confirmation of the baptismal vow, and for the participation of the eucharist, are publicly examined. On the Saturday evenings before the celebration of the Lord's supper, there is a sermon of preparation, with prayers. The same course is observed on the use of the public fast days."²

¹ See Works, vol. i. p. 218.

² See the Liturgy of the Fr. Prot. Ch., p. 17, Charleston, 1836.

In the "Discipline of the Reformed Churches of France," chap. xiv. canon i, it is expressly enjoined, that "no person shall be received into communion in the church, till such time as he *have first PUBLICLY* renounced all the superstitions and idolatries of the Romish church, and in particular the mass."¹ This puts it beyond controversy, that in these churches, some such form as is now advocated was in use.

It was also required, that no person should be allowed to present children in baptism, until they "shall have communicated at the Lord's table," or if not, "they shall protest seriously, that they will do it, and in order to do it that they will suffer themselves duly to be catechized."²

That this practice of the Reformed churches is still preserved in them, will appear from the following quotation from the Tour of the Rev. Theodore Fleidner, in Holland and England. In reference to the churches of Holland, in which there has been a sad corruption of doctrine, as it relates to the matter on hand, he says, "The confirmation, or declaration of profession of the faith, takes place without any pomp whatever, in the house of the pastor, and in presence of one or two elders. According to a synodical ordinance of 1816, all persons privately

¹ See Quirk's Synods of France, vol. i. p. 54, fol.

² See do. p. 66.

confirmed, must at least, in open presence of the congregation, be established in their confirmation, by replying to the following questions proposed to them by the minister, after the sermon :

I. If they believe from the heart, the doctrine they have owned.

II. If they have also received, by God's grace, to abide in this doctrine, to forsake sin, and to live a Christian life.

III. If they submit themselves to the superintendence of the church, and in case of committing a fault, to its discipline."¹

Were it necessary we might greatly enlarge these proofs, but will only briefly add references to others which have occurred to us in our reading. Howe is very express in his testimony in favor of such a form.² In the time of the Commonwealth, the Congregationalists made an *explicit* covenant essential to the *being* of any church. This the Presbyterians denied. They alleged, therefore, that an *implicit* covenant was sufficient, but allowed that the other was not *wrong* and might be employed. An *explicit* covenant was accordingly agreed upon by six Synods and approved by the author from whom I quote.³ This is the true ground of

¹ See the Edinb. Presb. Rev. 1835, p. 264.

² See Rogers's Life of, p. 75.

³ Separation Examined, etc., by Rev. G. Firmin, Min.

difference between the Congregationalists and Presbyterians. The former made such a covenant essential to the *being* of a church; the latter "prudential, for the better order and expediency of the service of God," as it is stated in "A Review of the Survey of Church Discipline," by Mr. Hooker.¹

As baptized persons, when they claim the privileges of the church, are bound to show that they are as fit to partake of the sacrament as they were of baptism, therefore should they as publicly show forth this fitness: so argues Gillespie.² Rutherford in his "Due Right of Presbyteries," argues the question at length, and allows that such a covenant is implied, that an *explicit* covenant is allowable, and that it is sometimes formally made, but that it is not essential to the constitution of a church. He thinks that all who have been heretical, infidel, or openly sinful, ought to be required publicly to make confession of their faith, even though they had been baptized, and this he gives as the opinion of all the reformed churches.³

In the Laws of the Church of Geneva, made in accordance of the church in Shalford, in Essex. Lond. 1652. 4to. With a Dedication to the London Ministers. See p. 82.

¹ By D. C. London 1651. 4to. See pp. 124 and 97—106, 108—11, etc.

² Aaron's Rod Blossoming, p. 482, etc.

³ Lond. 1644. 4to. pp. 84, 85, 86, 88, 91, 99, 122, 123, 125, 126.

cordance with Calvin's views, it is provided that the child before admission to the communion "shall make a confession of his Christianity in presence of the church."¹

Willison, in his *Sacramental Catechism*, says, as to the practice in Scotland: "And accordingly I have known ministers after much pains taken with young candidates in private, they have called these young communicants together in a public manner, catechising them, and opening up the nature of the gospel covenant, and with some solemnity asking each of them their consent thereunto, &c. Unto all which they joined suitable directions and encouragements, concluding by giving up and recommending these young persons to God in solemn and fervent prayer, which method I have known accompanied with great tenderness and many tears . . . yea, and very moving impressions upon the whole audience. And I doubt not but such seasons have been to some the time of their espousal to the Lord Jesus Christ, which they are to remember with thankfulness and praise."

We might add still further testimonies, but forbear.

Having thus clearly established the fact, that forms of public profession of faith were sanctioned by the Reformers, and especially by our Presbyte-

¹ Lond. 1643, p. 6.

rian forefathers, in Scotland, in England, and elsewhere, we shall proceed to show that this practice was no less common among the Independents.

In a work written by the Rev. Matthias Maurice, who was born in South Wales, A. D. 1684, entitled "Social Religion Exemplified," and reprinted, with notes, by the Rev. Edward Williams, D. D., the author gives a delineation, in a dialogue form, of what he believed to be the truly Scriptural and Apostolic order of the Church of Christ. In describing the services of a communion Sabbath, he thus speaks, p. 59 :

"It was agreed that Yefan should go before them in the work of the day : he then stood up and read, with an audible voice, the confession of faith, which contained the principal heads of divinity ;—much to the same purpose with what we call the *Assembly's* and the *Savoy* confessions.

NEOPHYTUS. Then the doctrine we call *Calvinism* is, I see, a great deal older than *Calvin*.

EPIPHETUS. Aye, to be sure ; for he took it out of the Bible, and so did these. But *Yefan*, having read it distinctly through, said to the people—If thus you believe with the heart, and if thus you are ready at all times to confess with the mouth, stand up and signify it by lifting up the hand : which they unanimously did.

Then *Yefan* read the *covenant*, the people all sitting, and told them, that this was the holy co-

gagement they were now going to enter into before the Lord ; and having read it to them, he said he would now read it for them and himself, and desired they would all stand up, with their right hand lifted up towards heaven ; and, at the conclusion, they all said, *amen*. And Yefan, the company being seated, said—" But Christ, as a son over his own house, whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end ; the house of God, the church of the living God ; no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone ; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth up an holy temple in the Lord, in whom we also are built together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

NEOPHYTUS. Well, great was such a day's work ; but you will oblige me with, at least, an abstract of the *covenant* ?

EPIPHANES. It ran thus : " We, poor sinners, having destroyed ourselves—yet, being brought through grace and everlasting love, to look unto him on whom our help is laid—under a sense of exceeding sinfulness, repent and mourn before the Lord ; and do here openly, and without reserve, resign ourselves and ours up wholly unto Christ, the complete Saviour of sinners, in church fellowship

and communion—resolving and promising in his strength, to believe his *promises*, live by faith on him, obey his *precepts*, hearken to the voice of his *providence*, serve him and each other according to all the laws, statutes, and ordinances of his house—taking the written word for our rule, aiming in all at the *glory* of God our Saviour, our prophet, priest, and king—each other's edification, the increase of Christ's kingdom, and the good of all mankind, under the special direction and by the assistance of the Spirit of the Lord.”

“Thus, you have a plain account of the first church at the Caerludd, matter and form. First, they were converted by grace, and so fitted for a spiritual house; and then, under this holy engagement they associated together, and became *formally* a church of Christ.”

The account given of the church of Northampton, will be found to describe equally, the custom in the New England churches generally, at the time of Edwards. “When a person desired to join the church, he visited his minister, declaring how the Lord had been pleased to work his conversion; if the minister found the smallest ground of hope, he propounded him to the *church*, after which, some of the brethren, with the minister, examined him again, and reported their opinion to the church. After this, all the congregation had public notice of his design, and he publicly declared to them the

manner of his conversion. All this was done to prevent the polluting of the ordinance, by such as walk scandalously, and to prevent men and women from eating their own condemnation." It was formerly "the general custom of Independent churches, to require from candidates for admission, *besides* a confession of faith, a statement of religious experience, either orally delivered, or committed to writing."¹

Dr. Owen seems to have thought some such form both scriptural and proper. Thus, after enumerating the qualifications requested for admission to the church, he says, "It is required, that these things be testified by them unto the church, with the acknowledgment of the work of God's grace towards them, and their resolution, through the power of the same grace, to cleave unto the Lord Jesus Christ with full purpose of heart, and to live in all holy obedience unto him."² This practice is, at this time, in some form, generally followed by Congregational churches, both in this country and in Europe.

We are thus prepared for our third proposition, which is this: that such a public profession is, in some form, retained in every church. It is so universally, in the baptism of infants; for in this case,

¹ Wilson's Hist. Inq. p. 28.

² See Works, vol. xix. p. 563.

the parents make a public profession in the name and on behalf of their children. And confirmation in the Episcopal church is nothing more than a corruption of this primitive form of public profession of religion.

In the Methodist churches, every individual, before admission to the sacrament, is expected to give a public statement, before the members of the church, of his Christian views and experience. This is also, in some form, the practice of the Baptist churches.

If, therefore, some form of public admission to the church is not adopted by Presbyterians, it must be acknowledged that, in this respect, they would stand alone. They would be found to differ, not only from all other evangelical churches, but also from themselves, if we are to be instructed in this matter by our own directory, and the example of former generations. The neglect or abandonment of this scriptural practice in this country, because in the exact form herein recommended it is not pursued, at least generally, in Scotland or in Ireland, is altogether inexcusable. For it is common in both those countries, for the candidates for admission to the participation of the Lord's supper to be, for some time previous to the communion Sabbath, publicly catechized in the church, and thus thoroughly prepared for the solemn duty before them. During this catechetical examination, full opportu-

erty is given to ascertain the qualification of the several candidates, and their ability worthily to eat and drink at the Lord's table, and to discern the Lord's body; and to keep back from that sacred feast, any who give evidence of ignorance, or unworthiness. In this way, also, are they generally made known to the people, and formally and solemnly introduced to the communion, while they are more particularly examined and received by the church session. In some churches, still further means are taken for securing the important ends aimed at in this form of profession. Thus it was formerly the practice in Scotland, "for the clergyman to examine the congregation, previous to every communion, both to ascertain what improvement they had made in knowledge, and as a means of communicating instruction upon those subjects where they were most deficient, and required it most."¹

In 1645, the Assembly ordained, "that in administration of the Lord's supper, congregations be still tried and examined before the communion, according to the by-gone practice of the King."² "Something of the same kind continues to be done, although probably nowhere in the same formal manner as before."³

¹ History of the Church of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 57.

² Acts of Assembly, p. 162.

³ Alexander Hall's Practice of the Ch. of Scotland, p. 12.

In the year 1706, it was further enacted: "It is recommended to the several ministers, to take as strict trial as can be, of such as they admit to the Lord's supper, *especially before their first admission thereto*—and that they diligently instruct them, particularly as to the covenant of grace, and the nature and end of that ordinance as a seal thereof, and charge upon their consciences the obligations they lie under from their baptismal covenant, and seriously exhort them to renew the same."¹ In 1648, it was provided, "that persons grossly ignorant be debarred from the communion; that for the first and second time they be debarred, suppressing their names; for the fourth time, that they be brought to *public repentance*."² The testimony of Mr. Willison and others, has also been already adduced.

Now, even were these regulations fully carried into operation in this country, it would not render less valuable and instructive, the practice here insisted on. But surely, it is preposterous to object to this plan where those services are not at all observed, and thus to introduce members to the church of Christ, without any of that publicity and strictness which is recognised as necessary in the forms, at least, of our own and all other evangelical churches.

¹ Acts of Assembly, p. 164.

² See *do.* p. 258.

It only remains, therefore, that we should briefly show, that such a public profession and engagement is reasonable and advantageous. We believe it is so every way, and that it must be so, we may safely conclude from the scriptural authority on which it rests, and the universal adoption of it by every Christian denomination.

This practice is reasonable, because it is a measure which reason would at once dictate as proper, in introducing to any public body, where a knowledge of the character and qualifications of candidates is necessary, a new member. It is a measure which, in some analogous form, is adopted by every society, whether scientific or political. It gives importance to the occasion, and dignity both to the candidate and to the society of which he is to become a member. Besides, such a solemn and imposing introduction has formed the threshold of admittance into every species of august and imposing mystery, connected with religion. And where can it be more necessary, than when a man is to take upon himself the holy name of Christian—to profess himself to be the disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be ready in the midst of a world of enemies, to “glory only in His cross?” What more suitable way could be devised of impressing upon the mind, the nature of that high and holy calling which is thus assumed—the importance of those doctrines which are thus professed, and the

Irrevocable nature of that covenant which is thus contracted? What could more affectingly draw out the sympathy and love of Christians, one toward another, and call forth their prayers and awaken their interest on behalf of a new associate in the trials and the joys of the Christian life? The primitive church thought that by this form, and the caution, deliberation, and publicity which it required, men would be made most truly sensible of the nature of the Christian religion, and of their great obligations to continue steadfast in that faith and obedience to Christ, which they had in this way so solemnly avowed, not only before men, but in the presence of God and the holy angels. To this sacred form and pledge, would the early preachers of the cross often appeal, that they might arouse the slumbering conscience of the formal professor; pointing him backwards to this voluntary consecration of himself to the Lord who bought him; and forwards to that judgment bar, where, by his words he would be justified, or, by his words, be everlastingly condemned. Thus it was that Chrysostom, in his last discourse to the people of Antioch, expostulated with them, and entreated them with tears, to live only to that God they had avouched to be theirs.¹ By this, too, it was hoped the church would be delivered, in some good measure, from hypocrites and deceivers, and be also

¹ See Bingham, vol. iii. p. 234.

leagued together by this "oath of their holy warfare," (as it was called,) in inseparable amity and unconquerable fidelity to their Lord and Master.

And shall we shrink back from the cross, in the profession of that cross? Shall we refuse to give a reason of the hope that is in us, to all men? Shall we be less willing to bear public testimony to the Lord who bought us, who redeemed us with his precious blood, and in whom we rest our hopes for salvation? Or is it less necessary now, while infidelity and error abounds, to raise up a standard in the midst of the people—to proclaim the great doctrines of our salvation, and to hold forth the lamp of light and of life? Is there not something beautiful, something most consonant to the solemnity of the occasion, and to the circumstances of all present, when those who in time past have been the servants of sin to obey it, who have neglected and forgotten God, and provoked him to his utmost wrath, having been reconciled to him by his Son, come forward, and, as the Psalmist sings, in the presence of the great congregation, take the cup of salvation into their own hands, and pay their vows unto the Lord; renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; take upon them the name of Christ's disciples; give themselves to him and his service; are welcomed in love and confidence by an affectionate people, and thus lay deeply that foundation,

upon which they can rest amid all the buffetings of temptation and distress? There is—every heart responds to the declaration that there is—the most unfeeling and obdurate spirit feels that there is—something in all this which testifies, that of a truth, it is not of man, but from God.

From the experience of thirteen years, during which time he has employed this form in the admission of nearly four hundred persons to the church, the writer can testify that the result, as far as he has known, has never been injurious, and always positively good. The testimony of the late Dr. Waddell, to this point, is peculiarly strong, and it is borne out by the concurrent experience of many in all portions of our church. On the other hand, many clergymen and elders have expressed the opinion, that in the absence of such a form, they have felt that there was a great deficiency in the order of our church, and the irreparable loss of one of the most powerful means of exercising that religious influence which it is the duty of the church to extend over its members, in every Scriptural and proper manner.

That this practice involves publicity, and an effort of great self-denial and devotion on the part of all who unite themselves with the church, is, we think, a chief argument in favor of it, and no valid objection against it. For surely in this age of the

church, when it is more reputable to be a consistent member of a Christian church than to be unconnected with it, it is altogether necessary, that every barrier should be placed in the way of an indiscriminate profession—and a touchstone of sincerity provided, which in addition to a mere private interview with the Church Session, may serve to detect, or rather to repel, those who are not in truth and sincerity what for carnal purposes they would willingly profess themselves to be. That this has been the actual and practical working of the system, in our experience of its influence, we could bring striking facts to prove; while all objections to it have as uniformly vanished, when the preparation of the heart for this great duty of consecration to the Lord has been given from on high.

There is but one objection, as it appears to us, of any *real* weight against this practice, and it is this: that by it, creeds may be introduced into our churches, contradictory in their doctrinal sentiments to the Confession of our Faith, and therefore subversive of orthodoxy. We say this is the only valid objection to this plan, for as to the variety of these forms, this we have shown is accordant to primitive usage, as founded upon Scriptural examples. But in answer to this objection, it may be replied, that inasmuch as our Confession of Faith is not designed to be made fully binding, in all its declarations, upon the members, but only upon the

ministers and elders of the church,¹ if *some* such public confessions are not employed, *no public confession of their individual faith will be given or received by the members of the church.* And further it may be replied, that while the introduction of such church creeds will require such a confession from every member of the church, their most perfect orthodoxy and accordance, as far as they extend to the Confession of our Faith, may be certainly secured, simply by each Presbytery doing its duty to each church under its care. For if each church is required, by each Presbytery, to submit its form of public confession for its examination and approval; or if each Presbytery would prepare a form of public admission to be used in common by all its churches; it is at once manifest that this practice, instead of opening a door for error, might become a bulwark of orthodoxy, and a defence of the faith as it was once delivered to the saints.

It has indeed been further objected, that "such a

¹ That in holding this view of our Confession of Faith, as being a bond of ministerial and official, and not of Christian communion, I am presenting the views held by Presbyterians, I might clearly show. It is sufficient, at present, to refer to Dr. Janeway's Discourse on "The Duty of the Presbyterian Church," pp. 19, 32. President Hill's View of the Church of Scotland, pp. 150-153. Carlile (of the Scots' church, Dublin), on the Use and Abuse of Creeds and Confessions, p. 25, etc.

rite must be entirely null and void; while he who seeks for a new admission to the visible church, by that very act renounces his former admission to it in baptism—denies and tramples under foot the privileges which, by the divine appointment, are connected with it; and as he cannot be introduced again into the church by the vain and impious ceremony by which men dare to supersede the effects of baptism, he falls headlong from the church of Christ.”¹ But this objection comes with a very ill grace from those who, in addition to the initiatory rite of baptism, hold also the necessity of the rite of confirmation, to a proper admission to the full participation of the ordinances of religion. This rite is public—it embodies a public profession of faith, and it implies the certain manifestation of a fitness, on the part of its recipients, for the worthy participation of all the benefits to be derived from the observance of the Lord’s Supper.

Now, in like manner, this public profession of faith and covenant engagement, is regarded as the voluntary ratification, by each individual who makes it, of that covenant with God and his church, made on his behalf in baptism. In this way, the individual takes upon himself the vows made for him by his parents, if he has been baptized in infancy—recognizes their obligation and necessity—

¹ *Palmer on the Church*, vol. i. p. 411.

makes profession of his personal belief in the great doctrines of the Bible—expresses his determination in the strength of divine grace from this time forth to live as becometh a disciple of Christ and a member of his church—and is thus received and acknowledged as a member of that *particular* church in which such a profession is made.

Such a form of introduction into the full enjoyment of all the privileges and benefits of the church of Christ, is therefore in no way opposed to, but on the contrary confirmatory of the unquestionable truth, that by their baptism, the right of the children of such as are already members of the church, to a membership in the same, is recognized and sealed. In this way, such persons avouch their claim to that privilege, avow their belief in those principles which are necessary to its enjoyment, and thus enter upon that inheritance to which they were aforetime heirs, but for which they were as yet unqualified.

That this exhibition of the scripturality and propriety of such a form of public admission to the church, may serve to remove prejudice against it, and to open the way for its universal introduction into every church, is the desire and the prayer of the author.

In the number of the Biblical Repertory, for January, 1840, pp. 26–30, this practice is formal-

ly objected to, but, as it appears to the author, on insufficient grounds.

The principal objection made against it seems to be, that it is a Congregational, and not a Presbyterian custom, and in accordance with Congregational rather than Presbyterian principles.¹

¹ It is declared by this reviewer, that this whole practice is novel to Presbyterians, and opposed to the genius of Presbyterianism. If this be the fact, it is not a little surprising, that one of the publications of the "Presbyterian Board of Publication," should contain the following statements, (see "A Guide to Communicants," etc., pp. 31, 32, 33.)

"In addition to what has now been stated, there is a particular view of the ordinance of the supper, which demands our most serious and deliberate consideration. It ought to be viewed by us as a most solemn form of self-dedication to God, and as a renewal of our baptismal engagement. In the ordinance of baptism, believing parents dedicate themselves and their infant offspring to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—they make a public profession of their faith in the great doctrines of the gospel; and they engage to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. When children, thus devoted to God, arrive at the years of discretion, and are capable of acting in their own name, they are required voluntarily to take on themselves the baptismal engagement—to make a public profession of their faith, in their own persons—and to dedicate themselves entirely to the service and glory of

Now suppose it is a Congregationalist practice, if it has been found, as used by them, to do good, and to serve many valuable purposes—and if it is not contrary to our principles, but rather a departure from pure Congregationalist principles, in favor of our own—and if those evils to which, in the

God. This is what has been termed by our older divines, personal covenanting with God. Whatever objections some may have to the mode of expression, the thing itself must be acknowledged by all true Christians, to be reasonable and scriptural. It is neither more nor less than an act of public consecration to God; and it implies a solemn promise and engagement that we will 'walk worthy of our high calling,' and that in the strength of his grace, we will 'stand fast to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, by a conversation becoming the gospel.' On occasions of this kind a few simple questions, such as the following, may be addressed by ministers to those of their congregations who have become candidates for communion, and with regard to whose attainments and character they have previously satisfied themselves."

Then follows a complete form for such a public introduction to the church, (see pp. 33-36), similar to one adopted by the Tenth Presbyterian Church, in Philadelphia. The author also possesses copies of several such forms, and among others, that prepared by the Rev. Dr. Plumer, for the Presbyterian church of Petersburg, Va., and by the Rev. John McDowell, D. D., for the use of the Central Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

unprotected system of Congregationalism it might lead, may be effectually guarded against by the discipline of Presbyterianism—then surely it ought to be joyfully admitted.

The following testimony to the working of this plan among the Independents in England, is strongly in favor of this reasoning :—

“Among the Independent denomination of the United Kingdom of Britain, who require every one desiring admission into their connexion to give a confession of his faith in his own language, I must say,” testifies the Rev. James Carlile, of the Scots’ Presbyterian Church, in Dublin, “I never met with one by whom the great fundamental doctrines, as laid down in the Westminster Confession of Faith itself, were not preached in purity.”¹

It is said by the Reviewer, (see p. 28,) “We are Presbyterians; we hold it to be expedient and agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the government of each church should be conducted by a bench of elders,” &c.

Now, on the same principles precisely, do we claim for this practice, the character of genuine Presbyterianism, *because* “it is expedient and agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians.”

¹ See on the Use and Abuse of Creeds and Confessions, p. 48.

It is also argued, that our Directory requires such a public profession only from adult unbaptized persons, and not from any others, and therefore, it is concluded, such was never designed.

But a contrary conclusion forces itself upon our mind, from the perusal of this chapter, (see chap. ix. Confession of Faith, p. 436.) In this chapter there is no direction whatever as to the precise mode in which persons shall be introduced into the church, except what relates to "the public profession in the face of the congregation, to be given by unbaptized persons." This, therefore, is the exemplar after which, in the admission of other persons, each church is left to frame her particular order.

Why, I ask, should unbaptized, and not other adults also, be required to make such a public profession? To approve their piety? Not at all; for it is only "after giving satisfaction with respect to their piety," (see sec. iv.) they are to be thus received. To ascertain their orthodoxy? Not at all; for they must also give previous satisfaction of their "knowledge." What reason then can possibly be given, why unbaptized adults should *publicly* make profession of their faith, after having given satisfaction to the Session, and publicly ratify their covenant with God, which will not also show the propriety of requiring such a public profession from those who, for the first time, by their own voluntary act take upon themselves, and ratify that

sams covenant, which on their behalf had been made *for* them, but not *by* them, in infancy?

This much at least is unquestionable, that such a public profession of faith in the face of the congregation, even after individuals have been approved by the Session, is not contrary to, but accordant with, the genius and polity of Presbyterianism.

There is not a single sentence in the whole Confession of Faith, as far as we have yet seen, that restrains any congregation from adopting such a form—that expresses any disapproval of it—that otherwise orders the arrangements for this particular occasion. It is left to each church to take such order in the premises, consistent with Scripture, as shall seem to it wise and necessary. And it is expressly *required*, that such a form shall be used in the case of unbaptized persons, (which, in a new and heathen country, would of itself be a universal requisition of every single person uniting with the church,) leaving each church to conclude, that if deemed advisable it may also be employed in every case.

Consistency demands this course, for otherwise Presbyterianism requires this public profession in all heathen countries, of every member, and in Christian countries, of some individuals—and in *many* churches, even at home, of all. As, therefore, it must be adopted in some cases, and may be made highly edifying and useful in all cases, it

should in all cases (under proper direction) be introduced.

But that we may thoroughly settle the matter, let us look further into this subject. The Church Session, it is said, has, by our Form of Government, the constitutional right and power *to receive members into the church.*¹ This is fully granted. The question however is, when is a member received fully into the church? Of course, not until he is baptized. The Session, therefore, if they are bound, *as a Session*, to consummate the act of receiving an applicant into the church, should baptize him at the very time in which he makes before them a credible profession of his faith. Where, in all the Scriptures, is the administration of this ordinance separated for days or for weeks, from that profession of faith on which its propriety is based? When not baptized, the individual is not admitted to the church. He must be baptized before this birthright becomes his, and if he can only be received as a member, by the body of the Session, that baptism should be performed by it in connexion with the profession of his faith made before them; for this profession, it is allowed, "*should immediately precede*" baptism.²

But what are the facts in the case? The applicant is not baptized by the Session, in their presence,

¹ See chap. i. sects. 1, 6.

² Biblical Repertory, 1840, p. 28.

and in immediate connexion with his profession of his faith, but by the minister, on some subsequent occasion, in the presence of the congregation. And since baptism alone, as a prerequisite ordinance, can entitle him to a membership in the visible church of the Redeemer, it is consequently plain that he is not fully received by the Session, but by the officiating minister. If, then, the Session can thus manifestly delegate their power to the minister, it is accordant to Presbyterian principles that the minister alone, in the presence of the congregation, should consummate, in whatever form is chosen, the act of receiving members into the church of Christ.

But further. In the case before us, the unbaptized person is declared to have given "satisfaction with respect to his knowledge and piety," to the Session, or in other words, he has made a credible profession of his faith in Christ. What then remains to entitle him to membership in the church? Nothing more than baptism. Having declared his belief in the Saviour, it only remains that he should be baptized into His name.

Why then is he required to do more? Why is he required to make another profession of his faith? Why is he required to make another "public profession"? Why is he required to make this profession, not only publicly before the Session, as the public representative court of the church, but once again "in the presence of the congregation"? A

profession of faith is necessary, in order to baptism. But this he has already given. This profession must be given in a form satisfactory to the Session; but this has been rendered. Nothing remains, therefore, but baptism, to complete the union of the individual with the church: and yet more is required, even "*a public profession of his faith, in the presence of the congregation.*" Most manifestly is it thus made apparent, that such a form of public profession before the congregation, is not inconsistent with the fact, that the Session of the church alone has the power to receive members into the church, and therefore that such Congregational professions of faith are not necessarily contrary to, but consonant with, the principles of Presbyterianism.

Once more we remark: It is unquestionably true that the Session alone has the power "to receive members into the church." But has not the Session also power to receive members into the church, in that form and order which they shall deem to be most proper and advisable? Where, in all our Book of Discipline, is the Session prohibited from receiving members into the church by a public profession of their faith, in the face of the congregation, and this after they have given previous satisfaction to that body by a credible profession of faith? And why may not the Session, after being thus satisfied, authorize the minister thus publicly

to receive this profession in the presence of the people, for the mutual benefit of them and of the individual thus received? And why is this less Presbyterian, or more inconsistent with the power of the Session, than the authority given to the minister to require such a profession, after it has been previously made, and by himself, and in the presence of the people, receive the unbaptized adult into the church of Christ?

And further still. Baptism implies and requires as a prerequisite, a public profession of faith in Christ. This is made in infancy, for and in behalf of the child who is baptized, and it is positively required that baptism shall be "usually administered in the church, in the presence of the congregation."

Now, when an individual, thus baptized in infancy, unites himself with any particular church, he assumes all his baptismal vows and obligations; he ratifies, in his own person, what was then done for him in the person of another; and he declares that profession of faith to be his, which was then made on his behalf; and on thus making his own personal confession of faith in the Redeemer, he is admitted to that spiritual inheritance to which he had previously a Christian birthright. Why then, I ask, should this profession and these solemn obligations be made and acknowledged, in the one case publicly, and in the presence of the congregation, and not merely before the Session, and in the other,

he made and acknowledged in private before the Session, and not publicly in the presence of the congregation?

These are not two covenants, as has been intimated, but one covenant; but in the one case, this covenant is made for and in behalf of the individual, he being a child; in the other, it is made with and by the individual, he being a man. In the one case, a title is presented and secured: in the other, that title is claimed, and the inheritance fully entered upon. There is therefore equal—nay, there is evidently much more reason for the public profession of faith in this latter case, even that of adults, than in the case of infants. There is such a propriety every way, and in every view of the transaction, both as it regards the individual, the church, and the impenitent around. Besides, in most cases the individual does not join the same particular church in which he was baptized, and therefore it is still more proper that he should make a public profession of that faith, in the open denial of which he has hitherto lived, in the presence of that particular church into which he is now to be received.

Our Book of Discipline, therefore, beyond contradiction, is not hostile to, but in favor of a public profession of faith, by all adults when received into the visible church.

The following is the Form adopted, and in use in the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, and printed in the "Manual for the use of the Members of the Church."

ADDRESS TO THE CANDIDATES.

You have thus presented yourselves¹ before Almighty God, with a view to dedicate yourselves² to his service, and to be recognised as members of his visible church. By a public contract, you are about to surrender yourselves to your Creator: to avouch the Lord to be your God; Jesus Christ your Redeemer; and yourselves his servants for ever. You are surrounded by witnesses who attest the compact into which you enter. The all-seeing eye of Jehovah is upon you; and his holy angels are spectators of this scene. Brethren, we trust you have not rashly come up hither. And in this confidence we invite you to approach, with a holy boldness, unto the great Head of the Church; casting all your anxieties and cares upon Him, and relying upon Him alone for grace and strength to fulfil your solemn engagements.

¹ The singular or plural may be used, as required.

² Or to renew your dedication. This may be used when any one joins on certificate.

PROFESSION OF FAITH.

You believe that there is one true God, constituting in his incomprehensible essence, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons in one Godhead. You believe in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; and that they contain the only rule of faith and practice. You believe in the fall of man, in his entire depravity by nature, and in the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You believe that, by his humiliation, obedience, and death, Christ made such a satisfaction to divine justice as is sufficient to expiate all sin, and to remove and wash away all the guilt incurred by both original and actual sin, from all who rest upon him in truth and sincerity. You believe in the doctrines of a general resurrection, and a future judgment; in the everlasting blessedness of the righteous, and in the endless punishment of the finally impenitent.

COVENANT.

And now, in the presence of these witnesses, you do solemnly surrender yourselves to the Lord Jehovah, receiving him as your portion, and acknowledging him to be the supreme object of your love. Depending upon divine grace for assistance, you hereby sacredly bind yourselves to glorify God by

obedience to his laws, and by a diligent observance of his ordinances. You promise to separate yourselves from the world, so far as its engagements would cool your attachment to piety, or bring a stigma upon your holy profession. You are now willing to consecrate a reasonable portion of your time, influence, and property to the cause of Christ; to co-operate in every good work; to live not unto yourselves, but unto him who died for you; and in your closets, in your families, and in the world, to act as betometh the gospel of Christ, and as you are required in the word of God. You pledge yourselves to obey the laws and regulations of this particular church, and to submit to its discipline, while you continue members of the same, throwing yourselves upon its care, and affectionately regarding its interests.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

• Beloved in the Lord, your engagement is now sealed. The contract you have formed, no power on earth can dissolve. These engagements will follow you through time, and accompany you to the judgment seat. We, who are members of this church, affectionately welcome you to a fellowship with us. We hail you as participants in the same glorious hope and blessing of the gospel.

And now, when you depart from this place, carry with you the salutary recollection, that the eyes of

the world are upon you, and that as you henceforth conduct yourselves, religion will be disgraced or honored. Remember that your engagement is not with man, but with God. The negligence, therefore, or the folly, or the coldness of others around you, can never furnish an excuse for your own dereliction. You stand or fall each one of you by yourselves. Abide, then, near a throne of grace; be diligent in duty; watchful in life and conversation; and you shall be assured of the fulfilment of that promise, "that he who has begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

NOTES.

NOTE A.—Page 23.

The following article appeared in the *Presbyterian*.

PIOUS FRAUDS.

The Rev. Mr. Cruse's Translation of Eusebius—and its mistranslations in favor of Prelacy.

MR. EDITOR—Archbishop Whately has a chapter in his work on the Origin of Romish Errors, on Pious Frauds, and the tendency of all parties to adopt them, in support of what they believe to be the truth. The Archbishop was evidently familiar with the fact that it was very common with writers of his own denomination to give partial and unfair translations in order to *make* certain writers speak in favor of their system. Of this policy—of which I have noticed several instances already, and will have occasion before long to notice others—I send you a glaring example in the case of the Rev. Mr. Cruse, who was or is Professor in the University of Pennsylvania. It is from the Rev. Dr. Killen of Belfast, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the General Assembly's incipient College, and the able opponent of the Rev. Mr. Boyd on the subject of Episcopacy. His closing suggestion will, I hope, be re-

sponded to by some suitable individual. Ought not a society to be formed in order to warrant an association at Princeton, to produce and publish such a series of Patristical authorities?

Yours, very sincerely,

THOMAS SMYTH.

BELFAST, DECEMBER 30, 1844.

MY DEAR SIR—When I had the pleasure of seeing you on this side the Atlantic, a few months ago, we had some conversation respecting the extreme incorrectness with which certain of the Fathers have been translated by some Episcopalian interpreters. At the time I happened to mention the version of the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, by the Rev. C. F. Crusè, M. A., of the University of Pennsylvania, as a case in point, and as it is right that the gross errors of that work should be exposed, I propose in the following communication to notice several instances in which the translator has done great injustice to the testimony of the bishop of Cæsarea. The entire publication is a libel upon the character of your American literature, but it is rather singular that some of its most palpable blunders are calculated to damage the argument in favor of Presbyterianism. To a few of these I shall now direct your attention. I quote from the edition of Crusè's translation, published by Bagster, London, 1838.

You are aware that Maurice, and some other advocates of diocesan episcopacy, have labored hard to show that *village bishops* were created by the party spirit which agitated the church during the age of Constantine and his sons. We can prove, however, from Eusebius, that these

clergies existed at least as early as the second century; and yet Mr. Crusè, in his version, has contrived to strangle the evidence on the subject. Thus in Book v. ch. 16, we read of "bishops," (ἐπισκόπους), one of whom is "Zoticus of Comana, a village," (Ζωτικὸν ἀπὸ Κομάνης κώμης). Mr. Crusè entirely omits the word "*village*," and renders the cause, simply, "Zoticus of Comana." (See his translation, p. 179.) Every one must see that the translator has suppressed a portion of the original, and that the omission is calculated to impose upon an Episcopalian reader. It conceals from him the fact that the early bishops were not confined to great towns—that they were scattered all over the country—and that, to use the language of Gibbon, a Christian diocese might be "reduced to a village."

I need not tell you that the early rural bishops, who about the beginning of the fourth century began to be contemptuously designated *choriepiscopi*, have proved nearly as troublesome to modern high-churchmen as they were to those by whom prelacy was originally introduced. It is very plain from the epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Corinthians (section 42), that they were instituted in the days of the apostles, and that they were at first of the same rank as the city bishops. We learn from Eusebius that, in the third century they were distinguished by the same name, and that they were thickly planted in some districts of the East. Thus, in a letter concerning Paul of Samosata, preserved in Book vii. ch. 30, mention is made of "*bishops both of the neighboring rural districts and cities, and presbyters*,"—(ἐπισκόπους τῶν ἐμμέων ἀγρῶν τε καὶ πόλεων καὶ πρεσβυτέρους.) Here it is clear that rural and city bishops are represented as numerous, and that they are mentioned

without discrimination; but Mr. Crusè completely garbles the evidence thus presented, for he renders the words—“*bishops and presbyters* of the neighboring districts and cities.” (See his translation, p. 281.) Every one acquainted with the elements of Greek literature, must see the unfairness of this translation.

The advocates of diocesan episcopacy are not very forward to admit that the people have a *right* to elect their ministers, and they have often evinced a disposition to explain away those plain proofs from antiquity, which may be deduced to demonstrate the practice of the early church. One of these is found in Eusebius, Book vi. ch. 29, where we are told that “*the whole people*”—(τὸν πάντα λαόν) concurred in the nomination of Fabianus to the bishopric of Rome. Mr. Crusè renders the Greek words—“*the whole body,*” (see his translation, p. 227), and as it is difficult to ascertain from the context whether the meeting consisted of clergy or laity, he has thus contrived to conceal a testimony which speaks strongly in favor of popular privileges.

In another place, Book v. ch. 16, Mr. Crusè represents the early Christians as holding “*frequent conversations,*” in many places throughout Asia, respecting the heresy of Montanus. Was the translator afraid plainly to tell his readers that *Synods* were so common at so early a period? The word “*conversations*” is gratuitously introduced, and though Synods are not expressly named in the original, it is clear from the context that the statement refers to such ecclesiastical conventions.

I might easily point out many other errors and absurdities in this translation of the great work of the father of ecclesiastical history, but I forbear. I have already pro-

duced sufficient evidence to prove that the version is miserably executed.

Could you not induce some of your American scholars of the true Presbyterian stamp, to furnish a translation of the works of the early fathers? Some of them have given abundant evidence of their qualifications for the task, and he who would accomplish it, would render an important service to the cause of our ecclesiastical literature. Faithful translations of the apostolic fathers, and of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Cyprian, and others, are very much wanted. Our Puseyites here are up and doing, for they have already published in what they call "A Library of the Fathers," an English version of large portions of our early church writers.

I am, my dear sir, yours very sincerely,

W. D. KILLEN.

REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D. D., *Charleston.*

NOTE B.—Page 23.

MANY believe in prelatical Bishops on no better authority than the undoubted existence of the word *Bishop* in the New Testament, and the fact that by a most daring fraud on Scripture and the rights of Presbyters, the "*rulers of Presbyters*" alone, i. e. prelates, are called by that name in the Romish and prelatical churches. May I ask any who have not examined the subject and are not afraid to know the truth, and the whole truth, in the case, to read the

author's work on "Presbytery and Prelacy," book i. c. iv., from which I make an extract:

"There was a time when it was denounced as heresy to maintain this position. Two of the charges alleged by Epiphanius against Acrius were, that he taught that the apostle, in the third chapter of his first epistle to Timothy, enumerates the qualifications, not of prelates, but of presbyters, and that in Titus 1. 5, 7, Paul considered bishops and presbyters the same persons, calling them indifferently by either name.¹ Even since that time the opinion now advanced, has been controverted with all imaginable zeal and learning, as by bishop Pearson and Dr. Hammond.² At length, however, the truth has prevailed against all opposing error, and it is now admitted by the highest prelatic authorities, that in scripture the terms bishop and presbyter designate one and the same office. Of this important concession, we will adduce some proofs. Bishop Onderdonk says,³ 'the name bishop, which now designates the highest grade of the ministry, is not appropriated to that office in scripture. That name is there given to the middle order of presbyters; and all that we read in the New Testament, concerning bishops, (including, of course, the words 'overseers' and 'oversight,') is to be regarded as pertaining to that middle grade.' 'That presbyters were called bishops,' says Dr. Bowden,⁴ 'I readily grant; and I also grant

¹ See Dr. Wilson's Prim. Gov. of the Ch. pp. 146, 147.

² See in Peirce's Vind. of Presb. Ord. part ii. p. 55.

³ Episcopacy tested by Scripture, in Wks. on Episcopacy, vol. ii. p. 420.

⁴ Wks. on Episcopacy, vol. i. p. 161.

that this proves that the officer who was then called a bishop; and consequently the office was the same.' Dr. Chapman is still bolder, declaring that 'the Episcopalian cannot be found who denies the interchangeable employment of the terms bishop and presbyter, in the New Testament.'¹

This term bishop, it would appear, was in use in this interchangeable application, even in Old Testament times. 'Yea,' says archbishop Ussher,² 'in the xi. of Nehemy, we find two named bishops, the one of the priests, the other of the Levites, that dwelt in Jerusalem. The former, so expressly termed by the Greek in the 14th, the latter, both by the Greek and Latin interpreter in the 22d verse, and not without approbation of the scripture itself, which rendereth the Hebrew word of the same original in the Old and by the Greek *episcopos* in the New Testament.' That the terms bishop and presbyter continued to represent the same office and persons, even to the close of the apostolic government and of the inspired records, is admitted by Hooker, who would have us believe, that for this reason the term angel is employed in the Book of Revelation.³ Such, also, is the judgment of Hadrian Saravia.⁴ To this may be added the opinion of archbishop Whitgift. 'I know,' says he, 'these names be confounded in the scrip-

¹ Dr. Chapman, Sermon to Presb., p. 238.

² The original of Bishops, in Scott's Coll. of Tracts, vol. xii. p. 268.

³ Eccl. Pol. b. vii. ch. v. § ii. p. 100, vol. iii. Keble's ed.

⁴ On the Priesthood, pp. 60, 85, 118.

tures, but I speak according to the manner and custom of the church, even since the apostles' time.¹ But we may go still higher, and give the avowed opinion of eleven bishops, two archbishops, and many other doctors and civilians, in the famous 'Declaration made of the functions and divine institution of bishops and priests,' where it is said, 'the truth is, that in the New Testament, there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only of deacons, or ministers, and of priests or bishops.' Bishop Burnet in his *Vindication of the Church of Scotland*,² says: 'and I the more willingly incline to believe bishops and presbyters to be the several degrees of the same office, since the names of bishop and presbyter are used for the same thing in Scripture; and are also used promiscuously by the writers of the two first centuries.' It is an argument of some weight in favor of the position that in the apostles' times the office of bishop and presbyter was one and the same, that the Syriac version, which was probably made early in the second century, and whose authority is very great, always renders the term '*bishop*' by a word which corresponds to 'elder' or presbyter, as in Acts 20. 17, 28; 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2; 1 Tim. 3. 1, &c. On this subject Michaelis remarks, 'we know that the distinction between bishops and elders was introduced into the Christian church in a very early age, yet this distinction was unknown to the Syriac translator.'³ To this opinion bishop Marsh ap-

¹ Defence of the Answer to Cartwright, Lond. Fol. 1574, p. 383.

² See Conf. 4, p. 165, ed. ii.

³ Introd. to the N. T. vol. ii. part i. p. 32.

pende the following note : ' this proves ONLY that the Syriac translator understood his original, and that he made a proper distinction between the language of the primitive, and that of the hierarchical church.'¹ That in scripture, the names of presbyter and bishop were interchangeably applied to the same office and order, is allowed, also, by many of the ancient fathers."²

" What, then, was the reason, for thus tampering with the divine authority ; for thus casting imputation upon the divine wisdom ; and altering a divine arrangement ? One of their own party has said, that ' a self-originated upstart may take a man's name, and claim his inheritance ; but when his title comes to be examined, the true right will appear, and justice will take place.'³ And so will it be in the present case. For the change in these names manifestly proves, that a change had taken place in the relations of the two offices or orders to which they had been applied.⁴ Otherwise, the change would have been unnecessary, and sound policy would have forbidden it, since ' a veil of mystery is hereby artificially thrown upon the subject, which would never have existed, if the original name of apostle had been suffered to remain unaltered.'⁵ Nor can all the skill of man wipe off from prelatists, the unescapeable im-

¹ Ibid, vol. ii. p. 553.

² Bingham's Eccl. Ant. b. ii. c. i. vol. i. p. 41, and c. xix. p. 189.

³ Jones's Wks. vol. iv. p. 495. Essay on the Church.

⁴ See this argument employed by Burnet, on the xxxix. art. p. 436.

⁵ Dr. Chapman's Sermons to Presb. of all Sects, p. 239.

putation, that by this exclusive appropriation to the order of prelates, of the term bishop, which belongs exclusively to presbyters, they intended to palm the order of prelates upon the world, under the cover of a divinely instituted title, and thus to procure for it that divine origin, authority, and preëminence, to which it has no scriptural claim. Nor have all the learned advocates of prelacy, with all their sophistry, been able to defend her, in this matter, from manifest sacrilege, and a violation of 'the sacredness of divine truth.'¹ And if prelatists will resent this charge as calumnious, let them inform us when, where, by whom, and upon what authority, this change was made, and why that title, which was signed, sealed, and delivered over to presbyters, as their perpetual right, was employed by prelates, to cover the nakedness of their pretensions to a divine charter?"

NOTE B.—Page 92.

"It may not be amiss to enter here, a little minutely, into the consideration of this question; as the Romanists have, since the times of Menezes, assumed that every Eastern church has, in common with itself, the Seven Sacraments; namely, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penitence, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

"It appears, however, from the Acts of the Council of

¹ See Bishop Bull's Vind. p. 258.

Diamper, held under Menezes in 1599, that the Christians of St. Thomas held only three Sacraments: namely, Baptism, the Eucharist, and Holy Orders. This was remarked by La Croze (p. 342) and opposed to the erroneous statements of Renaudotius, in which he had assumed, as above remarked, an universal consent with the Church of Rome in the use of the Sacraments.

"La Croze moreover asserted (p. 205) that the Eastern churches had not recognized even the number of seven Sacraments prior to the times of the Crusades, when they had probably adopted it, (and metropolitans and other similar corruptions,) in imitation of the Latins. Asseman, however, (tom. iii. part ii. p. 391, &c.) in his refutation of La Croze, objects that the Christians of St. Thomas had, in this particular, deflected from the faith of their forefathers; and then professes to show, from what he deems ancient authors in the Syrian Church, that not only the number of seven Sacraments was acknowledged, but that the very Sacraments of the Romish Church were originally held by the Nestorian Church.

"The first author, however, that he produces, is Ebed Jesa, Metropolitan of Soba, who flourished in the beginning of the fourteenth century. With respect to the other authors, whose names he mentions (p. 240), some of whom lived as early as the seventh century, it is sufficient to remark, that not one of them has acknowledged the existence of seven Sacraments, much less identified them with those of Rome. La Croze has moreover shewn (p. 342), that, prior to the twelfth century, no mention is made of the seven Sacraments, even among the writers of the Latin church; and

that Allatius could not, in like manner, produce one testimony to the same effect from the ancient Greek Fathers.

"Ebed Jesu, (Bib. Orient. tom. iii. pt. ii. p. 240,) does indeed acknowledge seven Sacraments, yet these do not coincide with those of Rome: 'There are,' says he, 'seven Sacraments, which are, according to the intention of the Divine Books, 1. Orders, which is the completion of all the Sacraments; 2. Holy Baptism; 3. The Oil of Unction; 4. The Offering of the Body and Blood of Christ; 5. The Remission of Sins; 6. The Holy Leaven; 7. The Signing of the Life-giving Cross:' where no mention is made of the Sacraments of Confirmation or Matrimony.

"With regard to Confirmation, Menezes was well aware that it was wholly unknown in India; for in the Acts of the Synod of Diamper (Geddes, p. 213), he says: 'Forasmuch as hitherto there has been no use, nor so much as knowledge, of the Holy Sacrament of Confirmation among the Christians of this Bishoprick,' &c. Father Simon, Renaudotius, and Asseman, have, however, evaded this, by the sweeping observation that Menezes knew nothing at all about the matter; and adding, that the Sacrament of Confirmation in the East is included in that of Baptism. It is remarkable (Geddes, p. 210), that the Jesuits in England had formerly recourse to the same expedient; and asserted, moreover, that Confirmation was not very necessary, and might be dispensed with. It should follow, if this mode of arguing be granted, that the Syrians acknowledged eight Sacraments, which effectually destroys the fancied agreement in number.

, "But it does not appear from the Syrian writers them-

selves, that any such construction ought to be put upon the use of the Holy Oils in Baptism. 'The oil,' (Bib. Orient. tom. iii. pt. ii. p. 247,) says Elias, Bishop of Anbara, who flourished early in the tenth century, 'with which the priest anoints the heads of baptized persons, is a *mystical sign* of the confidence which the saints do hence receive." And Timothy II., Metropolitan of Mosul and Arbela, A. D., 1318, says (Bib. Orient. tom. iii. pt. ii. p. 261), 'So water, oil, the Priest, and the prayers of the Priest, are the substantial parts of Holy Baptism, if one of which be wanting, Baptism is by no means complete.' Words to the same effect, are used by George, Metropolitan of Arbela, who flourished about the middle of the tenth century. What is cited by Asseman from Joseph II., in which he reproaches the Nestorians for not acknowledging the Sacrament of Confirmation, vanishes, when we know that this Joseph is one of the sham Patriarchs that was set up by Pope Innocent XII., A. D. 1696, and whose authority was never acknowledged at Mosul. It appears therefore that the Christians of St. Thomas had not deflected from the usage of their forefathers in not acknowledging the Sacrament of Confirmation; and that the citations made by Asseman himself tend to prove the statements of La Croze, which they had been intended to refute.

"Asseman and Renaudotius, however, go still further, and would prove, from the use of this holy oil, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction as acknowledged in the Eastern Churches: but not to mention that this would swell the number of Sacraments to nine, and that Ebed Jesu does not admit it in his enumeration of the Sacraments, and

that (Bib. Orient. tom. iii. pt. ii. p. 276) George of Arbela only mentions the laying on of hands upon the sick as one of the duties of the Priest, it cannot follow by any just mode of arguing, that Extreme Unction was ever yet considered as a Sacrament in the East.

"It would hardly have been expected that Asseman would have attempted to show that Matrimony was considered as a Sacrament by the Syrians, when Ebed Jesu had excluded it from his enumeration of them ; yet that nothing may be left untried to support the faith of the Church, he has attempted this also. 'Simon Sulaka,' says he, 'when a monk at Rome in 1553, expressly enumerated Matrimony in the number of the Sacraments.' The account given by Geddes (Hist. Church Mal. p. 12), of this Simon Sulaka, is, I think, a sufficient refutation of his statements. 'In the year 1552, one Tum Sind, or Simon Sulacan, a monk of the order of St. Pachomius, who pretended to have been chosen Patriarch of Mosul, or Selucia Parthorum, or Babylon, for they are all the same, by the whole clergy of Persia and Assyria, came to Rome and submitted himself to the Pope. He presented letters and a Confession of Faith to the Pope, which he pretended were sent by all the Eastern Bishops. In these letters the Pope's supremacy was exalted as high as if they had been written by a parasite Canonist, &c. Tum Sind, after he was dismissed at Rome, instead of returning to Babylon, went and lived in an obscure place, called Charamet, or Amed,' &c.

"As to the citation from Ebed Jesu (Bib. Orient. tom. iii. pt. ii. p. 318), in which St. Paul's words are translated,

'This is a great Sacrament, but I speak of Christ and the Church,' it is unnecessary to dwell upon the refutation of such sophistry.

"It may, perhaps, not be amiss here to remark, that the matter of the Holy Leaven, as also that of the Oil, is considered among the Christians in the East as a Sacrament, supposing they have preserved them from the apostolic times. This is a great proof of their superstition and ignorance, which we may reasonably hope that a revival of true religion among them may induce them to disregard.

"The attempt of Asseman to show that Auricular Confession was in use among the Syrians, is no less ridiculous than that of endeavoring to establish the Sacrament of Matrimony: for it is well known that Joseph II., whose words he cites to this effect, was, like Simon Sulaka, a sham Patriarch of Amed, set up also by the Pope: he died A. D. 1714.

"It would be superfluous to enter into the question of Transubstantiation, as it is evident, from Asseman's own citations (*Bib. Orient.* tom. iii. pt. ii. pp. 294, 295), that some of the best and most ancient writers, of both the Nestorian and Jacobite community, did not hold it: and consequently that the Christians of St. Thomas could not with propriety be accused of innovation in this particular."



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